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A CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE

CLERGY AND CHURCHWARDENS OF THE DIOCESE
OF PETERBOROUGH

AT HIS SECOND VISITATION, OCTOBER, 1875

By WILLIAM CONNOR MAGEE, D.D.

BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH

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A CHARGE,

&c.

REVEREND AND DEAR BRETHREN.

THE occasion which assembles us here to-day, brings with it for all of us its impressive lessons. To many of you it brings again the long-vanished past, with its strange and yet instructive contrasts with the Church life and work of the present day; with its memories too of those whose vacant places here speak to us of that final account to which they have passed, and to which we are all so swiftly passing. To all of us, even to the youngest here present, it brings its reproachful record of duties omitted, opportunities wasted, plans unrealised, resolutions unfulfilled. To all of us, let us hope, it also brings its remembrance and its renewal of the obligations we have incurred and the vows we have taken; its fresh acts of self-dedication to the service of Him whose presence amongst us we have just invoked and recognised, and to whom we have once more solemnly offered ourselves, soul and body, as our holy and reasonable sacrifice.

To strengthen these feelings and deepen these resolves, and to direct them, if I may, both for you and for myself, into more and more strenuous and enduring effort, into higher and still higher life for God, must be my aim in the words of exhortation which I am now about to address to you.

If I have to speak, as I shall have to speak, to you of much that relates rather to the machinery of our work than to that work itself; if I have to deal, as I shall have to deal, with much that belongs rather to the ecclesiastical and almost secular side of our Church life as distinguished from its higher and more spiritual aspect, I would do so as not forgetting, as urging you not to forget, that these are, all of them, but means to one great end—

the winning and the saving of the souls for which Christ died. If I ask you to consider with me how as fishers of men we may best make or mend our nets, it is but that we may all the more readily and effectually obey the command which bids us launch out into the deep, and let down our nets for a draught.

My task on this occasion naturally divides itself into two parts.

I have, in the first place, to review for you the Church history of our own diocese during the last three years; and to tell you how far this has impressed my own mind with the sense of success or of failure, as judged by the standard of three years ago: I have in the next place to speak to you of some of those larger events in the general life and polity of the Church, which, if they have not perhaps all that direct and immediate influence on our work which some would attribute to them in the way of either help or hindrance, yet must profoundly affect it by the distractions which they cause, or the dispositions they engender amongst the workers.

Articles of inquiry at Visitation.

Turning then, in the first place, to the review of Church life and work amongst ourselves, I have to begin by thanking the clergy and churchwardens of this diocese for the full and explicit replies which they have for the most part given to the inquiries which I have addressed to them with a view to this visitation. These inquiries are made, as I trust you will believe, in no spirit of espionage or of idle curiosity. I have made them partly in compliance with the rule and custom of the Church; but mainly in order that I might be enabled to give you what you expect from me at each visitation, a faithful picture of the condition of the Church in this diocese. If I am to do this to any useful purpose, rendering justice not only to the subject, but to you whose work I am to estimate, I must obtain from you beforehand such information as shall make that estimate fair and accurate. This information, previously to the visitation, I can only obtain from the good-will and courtesy of the clergy. These articles of inquiry which I address to you are "articles to be inquired of in visitation," and no one therefore is legally bound to answer them previously. And there are even many of these which can hardly be regarded, which certainly I do not regard, as subjects of legal inquiry at the visitation. There are indeed amongst them certain statutable inquiries to which the clergy are required, as most of you are aware, under the provisions of an Act of Parliament, to make answers every year. And as regards these, I do not think that I make an unreasonable demand upon the convenience of the clergy, when, once in three years, I ask them to give me information in May or June, which they will have, in any case, to furnish me with in December. The greater part of these visitation queries, however, are not addressed to you as legal or statutable articles of inquiry; they are rather requests

for information as to what may be termed the religious statistics of the diocese. They relate, for instance, to such matters as the number of scholars in Sunday or daily schools; the number of communicants relatively to population; the amount of money contributed to Church purposes during the preceding years; the special helps or hindrances in each man's own ministry. The answers to these queries, when collected and analysed, make a most valuable and interesting part of the spiritual history of a diocese, and are a great help to a bishop in the administration of its affairs; and they have, moreover, a very considerable ecclesiastical and even political value, in times when the unscrupulous misstatements of the enemies of our Church need to be met and refuted by the true and accurate statements of her friends.

I can therefore hardly imagine any reason, or at least any good reason, why any incumbent should refuse to furnish this kind of information when asked for it by his bishop; and I should have thought, moreover, that the incumbents who do refuse it would have preferred giving their own accounts of these matters, accompanied by their own explanations of any of them that might seem to them to need it, to leaving the Bishop to ascertain these from other and less reliable sources, and to conjecture the reason why, unlike the great majority of their brethren, they should wish to keep them so profoundly secret.

The Visitation Articles addressed to churchwardens stand upon a somewhat different footing from those addressed to the clergy. The churchwarden is an officer of the Bishop; and his office being one of observation and complaint, he is legally bound to make presentment at the visitation of all matters which require to be brought under the notice of the Bishop. To do this in each case *viva voce* would obviously cause serious inconvenience to all present, and accordingly these queries, in accordance with the directions of the Church (as given in the 119th Canon),* are sent to the churchwardens beforehand, as the simplest and most convenient mode of enabling them to discharge one of the duties of their office; while, at the same time, they serve as a kind of charge and direction to them, often much needed, as to the manner in which those duties should be performed.

I trust that this simple explanation of the real meaning and use of Visitation Articles of inquiry may remove the misconceptions which I am aware in some cases exist respecting them. And, having now given this explanation once for all, I am quite content to leave this matter to the good sense and the good

* "The Archbishop and Bishop, when he or they do summon their Visitation, shall deliver, or cause to be delivered, to the Churchwardens, Questmen, and Synodmen of every parish, or to some of them, such book of articles as they, or any of them, shall require for the year following, the said Churchwardens, &c. &c., to found their presentments upon at such times as they are to exhibit them." Canon cxix. 1603.

feeling of the clergy and churchwardens of this diocese. I have very little doubt what the result of this appeal in most cases will be.

The picture of our work for the last three years which these returns present, is full of encouragement and hope. On almost every point by which we can judge of progress there has been a steady and, in some respects, a large advance. As regards the number and frequency of our Church services, I find a marked increase in the observance, by special services of one kind or another, of the seasons and festivals of the Church, especially of Lent and Advent; and I observe with satisfaction that Ascension Day is kept in 463 of our churches, being an advance of 85 upon the number returned at last visitation. The list of churches having week-day services has risen from 252 to 320, and of those having daily service from 36 to 60. The sad list of churches in which Holy Communion is administered less frequently than once a month has diminished from 187 to 123, and in many of these it is now administered with much greater frequency than before, while the number of churches where its administration is unhappily limited to the minimum of three times in the year, *allowed*—not *directed*—by the rubric, is rapidly decreasing. Let me hope that if I am spared to hold another visitation, I may have the happiness of announcing that it has vanished altogether. On the other hand, I find that the number of churches having weekly celebration of the Holy Communion has risen from 33 to 52; while in not a few instances I observe that a fortnightly has replaced a monthly celebration.

The communicants in this diocese, so far as I have been able to calculate, amount to nearly twelve per cent. of our Church population. I cannot, however, speak with certainty on this point, inasmuch as from some of our parishes I have received no returns respecting it, and this, in most cases, because the clergyman has either not kept any record, or any very accurate record, of his communicants, and has been unwilling to make a precise statement on a matter on which he was not positively certain. Let me suggest on this point how very desirable it is that every clergyman should keep careful note of the number of his communicants on each occasion (they are easily calculated), and that he should also keep a careful record of those who regularly communicate. Such a record is an invaluable test to each parish priest of the spiritual condition of his parish, and the success of his ministry. A well-restored and well-filled church, good schools, successful parochial organisation, are all of them cheering and gratifying evidences of the energy and zeal, or it may be the deserved popularity, of the clergyman. But if he wants to know how that spiritual work, for which these are but the

Frequency of
Church Ser-
vices.

Number of Com-
municants.

machinery, is progressing ; if he wants to know how far he has drawn his people closer, not merely to himself, or even to the Church, but to Christ, he must know how many of them are habitual frequenters of the table of their Lord. I am well aware that such a record is often a very disheartening one. I know how often diligent and faithful pastors tell me that, preach and labour as they may, they can hardly increase the number of their communicants ; and yet this very record of their failure has its value if it set the saddened pastor to search if there be aught in his teaching or his life that can have caused it ; or, should his heart acquit him of such fault, he may still learn the lesson, so full of chastening and yet of encouragement, that the sufficiency of our ministry is not of us, and that plant and water as we may, it is God alone can give the increase for which we pray and strive.

Let me add on this subject of more frequent services in our churches, a word of caution which will, I venture to think, be best appreciated by those to whose zeal and self-sacrifice we owe their increasing frequency. Frequent services have their dangerous side, as all work for God done by us sinful men must have, and their danger is, I think, beginning to manifest itself. It is that of substituting services in the church for pastoral work outside it. The minister of the Church of England is pre-eminently a pastor, and the good pastor must "know his sheep, and be known of them ;" and this knowledge must come either from their compulsory resort to him as their confessor, or from his diligent visiting of them in their own houses as their pastor. The former of these sources of knowledge is, I thank God, forbidden the English parish priest. He has no right to require a single member of his flock to come to him in confession, and if he had, there are many who would never so come. If he is to win his people, therefore, he must seek them diligently in their own homes, and teach them to know and love him there that he may draw them with him to the house of God. I look with some anxiety, therefore, on a growing tendency in some quarters to depreciate pastoral visiting in favour of more frequent services in church, and even to sneer at the former as mere idle gossiping, the time spent in which might be better employed by the priest in his study, or in "saying his office" in the church. Idle and profitless gossiping, undoubtedly, parochial visiting may be, and too often is, just as the saying of prayers by minister or congregation, may become a merely idle formalism. But there need be no formalism in either, and it is a grievous mistake to set these in antagonism to each other, or to think that one of them can ever be the substitute for the other. We have had enough, in times past, of depreciation of the work of the priest in the sanctuary, for the supposed more profitable work of the pastor in the parish ; let us take care how we run into the opposite error

of depreciating the work of the pastor in favour of the public ministrations of the priest.

Collections for
Church Mis-
sions.

I find that the number of churches having collections for either the foreign or home missions of our Church has increased since last visitation from 391 to 443. Those churches in which collections are still unknown are mostly in very poor or very small parishes, where the incumbent probably thinks that it would be hardly worth his while to have a collection for the sake of the small sum he would obtain; or where he may be unwilling to risk, by some new appeal, the diminution of the help he so sorely needs for the keeping up the schools or the charities of his parish. But surely this is a great mistake. The sum that such a congregation might contribute to missions, might do very little good to the mission cause; but it might do much good to themselves, if it taught them to give for some object not directly tending to their own benefit, and the largeness of heart that comes from such teaching would be seen ere long in larger gifts to their own parish charities. Of nothing is the truth of the inspired saying, "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth," more true than of Christian almsgiving.

Let me entreat then each clergyman in this diocese, who has not yet done so, to bring before his people, at least once in the year some one or other of the Church's missions at home or abroad. His parish charities will be none the worse, and he and his people may be all the better for it. An opportunity for doing this is now afforded by the recommendation of the Convocation of this province, that one day in each year, St. Andrew's day, should be set apart as a day of intercession on behalf of the missions of the Church, and by the preparation of a special service to be used on that occasion. I heartily accept this recommendation, and authorise the use of this intercessory service in this diocese, and I trust that the clergy will all of them make it a regular and stated service in their churches. It consists, according to the provisions of the Uniformity Amendment Act, of selections only from the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. I confess that this has always seemed to me a needless restriction. I cannot see why so large a liberty in this respect should be allowed respecting hymns, and so little allowed respecting prayers. I cannot see why, if the minister may at his own discretion be allowed to introduce into the order appointed in the Book of Common Prayer, words of praise selected from any collection that he approves of, the Church in her Synods should not be allowed to appoint, for additional services, words of prayer that she may have selected from such collections as she might approve of; or why she should be reduced to the necessity of making abrupt dislocations of her Book of Common Prayer and awkward adaptations of words of Scripture in order to do what might be so much better and more simply done, by taking from the old Liturgical treasures ready to her hand such

Special Services.

prayers as might seem to her best fitted for the devotions of her children.

There would, I should think, be very little to fear as to the character of special services framed by Convocation and sanctioned by the bishop of the diocese. Indeed there would in this case be a stronger guarantee than there now is for the orthodoxy of such services. For it would not I imagine be a very difficult task to form a highly heterodox service by a moderately ingenious combination of the words of the Prayer Book and of Scripture, the only check in that case being the assent of the Ordinary ; whereas, in the other case, there would be the additional check of the assent of both Houses of Convocation of the province. I cannot but hope therefore that we may ere long obtain this reasonable addition to our liberty.

The amount contributed for church building and restoration since last visitation is £75,000, which at first sight seems a great falling off from the amount contributed in the preceding interval between two visitations, namely £149,000 : the falling off however is only apparent. The difference is accounted for by the fact that the former interval extended over nearly five, and the latter over only three years, and also by the fact that in the former amount was included the greater part of the fund raised for church extension on a large scale in Leicester—a work now brought nearly to a happy conclusion. With the building there of two new churches now in progress, and for the cost of which we have not taken credit in our account of contributions, the spiritual needs of our largest town may be said to have been fairly overtaken, so far as church accommodation is concerned, for the present ; though it is a significant fact that one of the last of these new churches is about to be built in a new parish constituted only three years ago, which when it was first marked out, but two years previously, for separation from its mother parish, hardly numbered its legal quota of 4,000 parishioners. The reference to this new church enables me to record the encouraging fact of our having again received, in one largehearted gift, a church and its endowment. The example set in the building and endowment of St. Mark's, Leicester, by two devoted lay members of our Church, has been nobly followed, this time by a clerical benefactor the Rev. F. Burnaby, who is building at his own cost and contributing an endowment for the new church of St. Saviour's.

In the town of Northampton we have commenced this year a large and much-needed effort for church extension, which I trust may yet prove as successful as that made for Leicester. Four new parishes at least, and four new churches, are needed in Northampton, to meet the spiritual wants of its rapidly-increasing population. For this we require a sum of not less than £33,000, of which I am thankful to say, more than £14,000 has been already promised ; and one of the four parishes we require,

Church building
and restoration.

already constituted as a Peel district, and a clergyman appointed to it.

I take this opportunity of thanking the laity and the clergy of the county of Northampton for the manner in which they have so far responded to my call for help in their county town. They have recognised in so doing the fact, which cannot be too often pressed upon churchmen of means and position in our country districts, that the great battle of the Church and of Christianity is now being fought in our great towns; and that once we lose it there we shall in vain strive to maintain it in our country parishes. If, therefore, these would still continue to enjoy those churches which have cost them so much to restore, and those peaceful pastoral ministrations which they so greatly prize, they must come to the help of their overwrought brethren in the towns, where poor endowments, scanty supply of ministers and great masses of unevangelised and alienated population, make the effort for church extension at once so urgent and so arduous. Be sure that there is no better, and in the end no cheaper church defence than church extension in the great towns of England. Let me at the same time express the hope that the citizens of Northampton will not rely too much on the liberality of the county, but rather justify and incite this by making a really great and strenuous effort to supply the spiritual needs of their own town and neighbourhood.

Church Educa-
tion.

The work of education is making steady progress amongst us. When last I addressed you respecting it, you will remember, we were just passing through the crisis of the new Education Act, and were anxious and doubtful as to how we should meet all the new conditions it imposed upon us.

The result has been to justify the expectation I then expressed as to the manner in which the Church in this diocese would pass through this ordeal. After a three years' experience of the Act I think I may say, that whatever may be its defects or its dangers, it has had one good result in the powerful stimulus it has given to Church education, and that not only in the building of schools, but in the tone and character of the education given in them. Since last visitation no less than 144 church schools have been built or enlarged, at a cost in voluntary contributions of £59,865; while in the preceding interval, there had been built or enlarged 105 schools, at a cost of £31,317. At what a cost of effort and of painful self-denial and sacrifice, this great work has been done in this diocese most of you are well aware; but the result has been that, with but few exceptions, our schools have been enabled to stand the strict, and in some cases perhaps the severe, requirements of the Education Department, and have become, what many of them were certainly not before, efficient and sufficient.

Another fact we have I think clearly proved is that, with equal efficiency, a Denominational school may be far cheaper than a

Board school. We might indeed naturally have expected this, for those who are expending their own money in a cause which they thoroughly understand and for which they care a great deal, are likely to be at once more economical and more successful than those who are spending other people's money on a cause which they do not always understand, and for which they sometimes care very little. When we find in one parish a thoroughly-efficient Church school sustained at a cost to its supporters of not more than three-halfpence in the pound, and in the adjoining parish of equal area a Board school which costs the ratepayers sixpence in the pound on their rating, we can have little doubt that it is possible to buy the right of excluding religion from a school at a price which many would be disposed to regard as rather beyond its proper value.

We have effectually disposed, too, of the religious difficulty, which once loomed so large upon the platform. The vision of anxious parents, eager to protect their children from the proselytism of the parson, which used so to vex the souls of conscientious secularists and sectarians, has vanished, as everyone in the least acquainted with the real state of the case knew that it would vanish, in the daylight of plain fact and honest report. The testimony both of government and diocesan inspectors, shows, that only in the rarest instances have parents availed themselves of their right under the Conscience Clause to withdraw their children from the religious teaching in our Church schools. I think, too, that it is now beginning to be seen that popular election of school managers does not always secure efficiency in return for increased expenditure. School boards elected by a majority of ratepayers, on the principle of representing every "interest" in the parish except that one of education, which alone they were intended to represent, are found sometimes to be not the best machinery for promoting that "interest;" and I think that it would not be difficult to point out instances in which this mode of conducting the education of a parish has resulted in throwing it into the hands of the most illiterate and unfit persons in it. I hope therefore that our managers of Church schools will be very slow, even under the increasing pressure of financial difficulty, to surrender any one of their schools to the management of a school board. And if they do find themselves at last compelled to take this step; I trust they will remember that they are in most cases joint trustees for our Church schools with the National Society which represents the interests, in the matter of education, of the Church at large, and that they will in every case, consult with the committee of that Society as to the terms on which the proposed surrender should be made.

Our system of diocesan religious inspection by paid inspectors, was, you will remember, inaugurated just before the last visitation. It has, I am thankful to say, proved a complete success. Our two inspectors are now heartily welcomed in almost every school in their respective districts; a fact which, I am sure that the school

Diocesan Re-
ligious Inspc-
tion.

managers in the diocese will bear me out in saying, is largely owing to the tact as well as the energy and ability with which the Inspectors have carried out their difficult and somewhat delicate task. Their inspection has revealed to us, as it was intended and desired that it should, the weak spots in the religious teaching in our schools ; a result for which none I think should be more grateful than the managers and teachers themselves, for there is nothing that the honest and earnest worker should desire more than that he should be helped in his work by one who can both tell him where it is defective, and how best to amend it. That their inspection has been received in this spirit, is apparent from the fact that they report "marked improvement in many of the schools of which, at first, they were compelled to speak unfavourably ;" while "the knowledge that an examination would be held has operated, both on teachers and on children, as a stimulus ; and the adoption of the syllabus issued by our boards of education, has made the work more definite, and caused it to be done more systematically."

I give in an appendix some of the tabulated results of their inspection,* which seem to me well worthy of the consideration of all who are interested in the work of education in this diocese. There is, however, one circumstance on which they remark, and to which I wish especially to draw attention, because it seems to me to indicate the special danger that besets all school instruction in religion. It is this, that in many cases the candidates for examination, "while showing considerable knowledge of Bible history, seem to have read it as mere history and nothing else, and had apparently failed to grasp the lesson which the narrative was meant to convey." This is exactly what we have to dread and guard against in all religious education ; it is the substitution of knowledge of facts relating to religion, for knowledge of religion itself. These are two very different things ; it is quite possible to teach a child a great deal of the letter of the Bible, and yet to leave him very ignorant of Christian belief, and very little under the influence of the Christian religion. A child may know by heart the history of the kings of Judah, or the geography of Palestine, or even the facts in the life of our blessed Lord himself, without being any the better for this knowledge, either in faith or in morals. Nay, he may even be the worse, if he has learned it all as a school task, in which he has been crammed for successive examinations, and has wearied heartily of in consequence, because he has never been taught to see its true use or bearing on his daily life. And yet it is so much easier to teach religion to children after this fashion, than after the fashion which trains them to be intelligent Christians and moral and pious men and women, that all our religious teaching is liable to drift in this direction of mere head knowledge of facts and dates and words, and that we too often succeed in turning out from our

See Appendix B.

schools a few tolerably good Bible scholars, and a great many very indifferent Christians.

And this danger is the greater from the fact to which one of our inspectors, in his able report, has drawn our attention, namely, "the great extent to which in this country the religious instruction of the children who attend our elementary schools is left by their parents to the day and Sunday school, while in the day school the religious teaching falls chiefly on the teacher in charge;" that is to say, in other words, that the children of the labouring class learn their religion mainly as a school task.

Religious teaching in Church Schools.

I cannot but regard this as a very serious fact, and one that goes far to account for much of that stolid practical ungodliness, that dull repugnance to religion, which we find manifesting itself in so many of our young people, just about the time of their leaving school. The real truth is, in many cases, that they have so entirely identified religion with school work, that they are only too well pleased to take leave of both at the same moment, and to remember both with the same feeling of thankful escape and freedom from task-work and discipline. One of our inspectors expresses the hope that "our teachers will increasingly recognise how dependent their scholars are upon them for their spiritual as well as mental development, and will seek not only to satisfy the requirements of diocesan inspection, but also to discharge to Church and State, a duty which those who are aware of the controversies of the day, cannot but regard as most grave." In this counsel to our school teachers I entirely agree, and I trust that they will lay it to heart. I trust that they will never cease to regard themselves as trained and sent forth by the Church to take part in the religious education of the nation, just as much as they are by the State to take their part in its secular education, and that they will do all in their power to raise the tone of religious training in their schools.

But I am satisfied that more than this is needed if we would escape the very serious danger I have referred to. The clergyman must take his proper place in the religious teaching in our schools. By this I certainly do not mean that he should take it altogether out of the hands of the school teacher. Such a secularising of the office of the teacher would, in my opinion, be one of the worst evils that could befall education in this country. I trust that we shall be content to leave such an exclusion of the laity from the teaching of religion to those who, while they advocate it, denounce the sacerdotalism of our clergy. What I do mean is that the clergyman should never leave this religious teaching entirely to the schoolmaster. I mean that he should aim at giving it in that form in which it is hardest for the schoolmaster to give, however willing he may be to do so—unassociated in the minds of the children with thoughts of school tasks and examinations and prizes for religious knowledge—simply as a lesson in faith and practice for their daily

life, drawn out for them by their pastor, lovingly and simply, from the facts or the words they may have learned from their teacher, and so giving to fact or word a new meaning and attractiveness that shall fix them, not in their memories only, but in their hearts and consciences for life.

Only by some such distinctly pastoral element as this in our religious teaching in our schools, can we, I am persuaded, prevent it from degenerating into that hard joyless task for the unsanctified intellect, that mere irksome addition to the drudgery of school work, which I fear it is to too many of the children in our national schools. I confess that I am sometimes afraid to think how many a youth has owed to his so-called religious education in day school or Sunday school his first feelings of hatred to religion.

The condition of our Sunday schools calls for no special remark, unless it be to note, as I do with pleasure, the formation of unions of Sunday school teachers, for conference and mutual improvement.

Catechising in
Church.

Catechising in our parish churches is making its slow but I hope sure progress amongst us. I shall not soon forget the pleasure with which I witnessed, in one of our large town churches, the catechising of twelve hundred children; nor the hearty, joyous children's service that preceded it; nor the pleased and interested countenances of the parents and friends who were present to listen and to profit by it.

Confirmations.

Our confirmations continue to be what they have hitherto been, amongst the brightest spots in the work of the diocese. I see the same care and pains still taken to make them really edifying; and, if possible, an increasing seriousness and reverence amongst the candidates. I see much less frequently than I did at first the strange spectacle of adult and even aged candidates for confirmation. A circumstance from which I infer that the number of unconfirmed adults left in many of your parishes as the fruit of old neglect, is being reached as far as it can be reached by the zeal of the clergy, and that now the ordinance is being restored to its proper subjects, children who have come to years of discretion.

Efforts for deep-
ening spiritual
life.

One other fact I have to note, and I do so with especial thankfulness. It is the efforts now being made by so many of the clergy for the deepening of their own spiritual life. It has been my happiness to preside at two large gatherings of clergy in this diocese, assembled to arrange for meetings at Embertide, for prayer and meditation and renewal of the vows of which that season should remind us all. More than all other men do we ministers need the help such meetings give against that temptation of formalism and unreality to which our familiarity with holy things so much exposes us. It is good for us, as it was for Christ's ministers at the first, to leave from time to time the doing of work even for Him, and draw with Him and with each other apart to pray, and then to walk once more with Him, with purer

hearts and more resolute purpose, the busy paths of our ministry. From such true revival meetings, kept free as I trust they may always be, from their one great danger of a narrow and unloving party spirit, I can anticipate nothing but good to those who take part in them, and to their flocks, and I heartily bid them God speed.

And now that I have thus passed in review before you the history of our parochial life and work during the past three years, I hope that you will feel with me that we have, on the whole, good reason to thank God and take courage. I know that this picture is not without its shadows of defect and failure and worse than failure. Statistics are we all know sadly deceptive, and are made up of very many and very different items in detail, and I could of course point out many such : nevertheless, knowing these as I do, I can most truly say that these accounts from your parishes are full of hope and encouragement, because they give such abundant evidence of honest, earnest self-denying work on all sides. So long as we see this, we have no need to despair of the future of our Church ; for say what men may about her many and great dangers, and they are many and great enough, her greatest danger is from her drones. The profitless lazy ministry of one unspiritual parish priest can do her more hurt than the excesses of many of her "extreme men." The evil that their faults, errors and extravagances may do, is real and serious ; I am far from underrating it, yet it may pass away and leave behind but the good that was mixed with it from the first. But the other is a pure and unmixed evil, and fruitful in all other evils. The schism, the unbelief, the godlessness to which such a pastorate—if it can be called a pastorate—gives rise may not pass away in many generations. Such a parish creates no disturbance in the Church, it furnishes no subjects for controversy in the religious newspapers, or suits in the ecclesiastical courts ; it only furnishes steadily year by year its fresh recruits to the ranks of the Church's enemies ; it is quietly multiplying dissent, strengthening infidelity, fostering ungodliness and vice. It is not an outward and visible sore upon the body of the Church ; it is only a hidden eating ulcer, which is quietly burrowing its way to her very vitals, and poisoning her life blood as it does so.

Work then, my dear and reverend brethren, hearty loving work in our parishes is the true secret, I believe, of Church defence and Church extension, and even ultimately of Church reform. Happily it lies within the reach of every one of us. All may not be, all are not called to be, leaders or reformers in the Church ; but all can be Church workers, nor need we pause in our work to wait for those reforms which so many of us desire. These may never come in our day, for it may be, as a great statesman has lately told us, that an institution so old as our Church is has grown "too stark and stiff" for any great organic changes ; but within the Church, even as it now is, there is ample room and verge

enough for more work than most of us can compass. The old-fashioned machinery of parish church and schools, of Bible and of Prayer-book, of preaching and of parochial visiting, lie ready to our hands still. Let us use these to the utmost, and we may find that more than one of the difficulties and hindrances we suffer from have vanished, and more than one of the reforms we desire are brought nearer as we work ; for it is still the upward pressure of parochial work that tends to bring about those changes in the higher sphere of government and administration which the Church now specially seems to need. Let us make our parishes then all that they may be made under our existing system, and our reformed and renovated parochial life will give us, if anything can give it, a reformed establishment and a renovated Church.

It will give us too our best and most available defence against those assaults of unbelief of which in the present day we hear so much. There can, I fear, be no doubt that our peril from these is a real and a growing one. Speculative infidelity is undoubtedly spreading from our universities down through a thousand channels into our remotest country parishes. The country pastor finds himself often confronted with objections against Christianity originally devised by sceptical scholars, but popularised for the use of the most illiterate of his parishioners, who at least understand this much of them, that they are so many new reasons, which learned men have discovered, why they need no longer trouble themselves with denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, godly, and righteously in this present life.

It is hardly perhaps to be expected that every clergyman in our Church should be able to refute these objections, though it is much to be desired that the study of christian apologetics were more generally pursued by the clergy than it now is. But there is one most powerful objection to Christianity, the most powerful indeed of all, which every clergyman may make sure shall never be a stumblingblock to any of his parishioners : it is the objection, derived from the careless or ungodly life of his pastor, that the teachers of Christianity do not themselves believe in the doctrines and precepts that they teach. And there is one most powerful evidence for Christianity, the most powerful perhaps of all, that every clergyman may place within the reach of every one of his parishioners : it is the evidence of that Divine life in the hearts of men which the Son of man declared he came to bestow.

If we believe His prophecy as to the future of His faith, we know that there is one event and one only, which can prove fatal to its continual existence upon earth, and that is the general ungodliness of those who profess it. The salt that has lost its savour will be cast forth and trodden under foot of men, say what men may to save it ; but until this happen it will live and preserve the world from corruption, say what men may against it. Let us then, my reverend brethren, take each one of us to heart this most

certain and awful fact, that we are each one of us powerful evidences for or against the gospel committed to our charge, and that as we live, so in great measure will our people believe. May God give us grace, so to live and work that all men may be compelled to own that there is that in our life and work which attests the truth of our teaching.

This thought of how little after all we are hindered in the doing of our ministerial work for want of reform in the machinery of it, has struck me forcibly in reading the answers I have received from the clergy as to the special hindrances they encounter in their ministry. For I find that, with one exception—that of the pew system in our churches—they have reference to certain external circumstances that surround their work, and not to the machinery with which they have to do it. I hear little or nothing of hindrances from the strictness of our rubrics, or the want of power to shorten or vary our services; but I hear chiefly of hindrances from such causes as dissent, or the irritation caused by the labourers' union, or intemperance; hindrances all of them that lie in the sphere external to the organisation of the Church, and which would be very little, if at all, touched by any measure of Church reform. A plain proof, I think, that the recent amendments in our Act of Uniformity have given the clergy nearly all they require in the way of elasticity and freedom in their ministry, and that whatever of strictness and stiffness may still remain, is not felt by them to fetter or restrain them so much as to be made a matter of serious complaint.

Let me say, however, a few words of counsel as to some of these hindrances to the ministry. There can be no doubt that they are each and all of them, though, of course, in very different ways, impediments to successful parochial work.

Dissent is certainly a very great hindrance in this respect to the parish clergyman. And in saying this, I say nothing that need offend the most sensitive of Nonconformists. Dissenters fully recognise the fact, and indeed it is one of their strongest grounds of offence with our Church, that she is intolerant of schism, and that her idea of schism differs essentially from theirs. She believes that the Church was designed by Christ to have not only an inward unity of the Spirit, but also an outward and visible unity manifested to the world by the existence of one visible Society, having a divinely-given creed, order, and polity, and that to separate from that society for anything short of its imposing sinful terms of communion, is the sin of schism from which she prays to be delivered. They believe that the Church of Christ was intended by Him to have an inward and invisible unity of the Spirit, not to be manifested by the existence of one visible society, but by the existence of a number of separate and independent

and self-originating societies with widely differing order, polity, and creed, which nevertheless display the unity of the Spirit by the mutual interchange of good offices, and the exhibition of brotherly kindness and charity towards each other. And, so far from regarding the multiplication of such societies as an evil, they regard it as a thing desirable *per se*, as tending to liberty and as promoting zeal and godly jealousy in good works. This, at least, is the theory of modern Dissent, for in its older form it recognised the desirableness of external unity, and justified separation only as a necessity; now it denies the desirableness of visible unity, and justifies separation as a gain and a blessing. Now it is clear that this is an irreconcilable difference on first principles between Church and Dissent, which no amount of brotherly feeling between individuals can heal over. And it is equally clear that while, on the principles of Dissent, the Church (I am not now speaking of the Establishment) should be no hindrance to the Dissenter, for whom it is only one sect amongst the many whose increase he regards as desirable; yet that on Church principles, Dissent must be a great hindrance to the clergyman whose aim must be, if he is true to his own principles, to draw all his parish within the visible unity of the Church. And even Dissenters themselves would admit—I know they do admit it when looking at this question from another point of view—that the existence of many sects may be after all a serious hindrance to the work of the ministry. They lament over the waste of power caused by the needless and endless multiplication of small rival communities, where there is really room for not more than one; and the weakening of discipline, caused by the too-ready acceptance by one rival sect of the exiled or offended members of another. Such hindrances as these are felt, however, much more keenly by the clergyman, who finds the spiritual energies of his parish, which he feels might effect so much if they were all united, frittered, as he thinks, and wasted in these separate channels of sectarianism, for which he, on his principles, can see neither necessity nor justification.

I say nothing of the more active hindrances that the clergyman experiences, from the direct and positive hostility of Dissent, from dislike to confirmation, for instance, and endeavours to hinder the young from resorting to it; from the drawing away of children from his Sunday schools, or the most hopeful of his fellow-workers or communicants to the chapel; or, again, from merely obstructive opposition, as he thinks at least, in the vestry and at the School Board election; for, although all these things are very trying and irritating, yet I am not sure that this open opposition and hostility may not, by the increased effort that it calls out on the part of Churchmen in his parish and the increased zeal and watchfulness it necessitates on his own part, indirectly help quite as much as it hinders his ministry. I

am not so sure that the work, or even the spiritual life, in all our parishes would gain by the immediate extinction of all Dissent. Rivalry and criticism are not absolute and unmitigated hindrances to work, even when the rivalry is, as we think, unwarrantable, and the criticism unjust. Speaking, however, of Dissent, not in its accidents of hostility or rivalry, political or religious, but in its essence as division and schism, it must, I repeat, be a real hindrance and weakness to the parochial ministry of the Church of England.

Nevertheless Dissent is a fact, and one which is certainly not in the least likely to cease to be a fact in our day. The question is, how shall we deal with it? In what way shall a clergyman best meet the hindrances it causes to his ministry?

Let me say then, in the first place, how he should not deal with it. Not certainly by denouncing and preaching against it. I doubt if many Dissenters were ever made Churchmen in this way; and I can quite imagine its being successful in turning some Churchmen into Dissenters. Teach your own people quietly and carefully the distinctive doctrines of your own Church; aim at making them loyal, intelligent, attached members of her communion; bring them to value her services as you perform them, and her doctrines as you preach them in their own parish church; win their affections to her, and not to yourselves, and you will have fortified them far better against Dissent, than by preaching the most able and elaborate of controversial treatises every Sunday of your lives. Men are won to or from their respective religious systems far more by their affections than by their intellects. Bring your people to love their Church as the home of their souls, and they will not be likely to be drawn away from her to frequent the dwellings of strangers.

In the next place, let us take care how we imitate the faults that offend us in our Dissenting opponents. Dissent is, many think, becoming more and more political, and less and less religious. So much the worse for it, if it be so; for it was the spiritual element in Dissent that gave it all its early strength and power, and if this should be lost to it, its power of hindrance will have passed away. A political club cannot long contend successfully with a spiritual society. For that very reason take good heed how you become too political in your Churchmanship; how you too grow loud and hot on public platforms and in after-dinner speeches, or identify the Church in your persons with the fortunes of one or other of our great political parties. The Church has no politics; the Establishment may easily have too much.

Thirdly, try and do justice to your opponents. I know no better rule for dealing with an opponent, even for the sake of getting the better of him, than this—Put yourself in his place, try and understand your position as it appears to him, and his motives in assailing it, before you proceed to defend it. And certainly we

Churchmen are specially bound to do this as regards Dissent, for most assuredly the guilt of schism is not all on the side of the Dissenter. The Church has dealt with her non-conforming children while they were within her pale too often in the very spirit of schism, erecting trifles into essential conditions of communion ; too often, moreover, in the spirit of dull obstinate hindrance to zeal and earnestness ; too often, alas ! in many a parish, in days gone by, in the spirit of cold indifference and neglect ; she has far too often provoked, compelled, justified Nonconformity to allow of her taking so very high a tone in dealing with it as some of her sons, forgetful of the past, would have her take.

In how many parishes in this diocese for instance, let us honestly ask, may not the rise of the Dissenting chapel be traced to a time not so very far distant when men who cared for their souls must have sought food for them there or starved. Things are altered now, and let us thank God for it ; but the Dissenter may have a better memory for the past than we have. It does not tend to soften his disposition towards what he has learnt to regard as an unscriptural establishment that, as he thinks, overshadows him socially and politically, to remember that it represents what his fathers knew as an intolerant or a careless Church. Try, my Reverend brethren, and realise this view of things as it presents itself to the Dissenting minister of your parish, and you may perhaps bear with more equanimity those anti-church utterances of his which seem to you so unreasonable and unfair ; but which for him are the expression of his deepest beliefs and most cherished traditions.

But I go further, and observe that it may be good for us to do justice not only to the feelings or prejudices of Dissenters ; but to the truths and the principles which Dissent in many cases represents and witnesses for. It is but a shallow and an ignorant view of ecclesiastical history which regards each Dissenting sect as having been once merely a foreign element in our Church which the strength of her constitution enabled her to throw off. I have no more sympathy with the ultra High-church theory which so regards the contest between our Church and Nonconformity than I have with the Ultra-Protestant theory that so regards our Church's struggle with Romanism. I believe that, as regards both, she has in the main best adhered to Catholic order and Apostolic doctrine. But I do not believe that in the contest with each she has always infallibly drawn the line between excess and defect. I believe, on the contrary, that there is hardly an instance of nonconformity or of schism that does not bear its witness to some truth unduly exalted on the one side as a protest against undue depreciation or forgetfulness of it on the other. I believe that in most such cases the error of the Nonconformist has been, not the assertion of the principle contended for, but the creation of a schismatical body simply for the sake of asserting it. I believe that in almost every

one of the forms of Dissent as distinguished from heresy, we may discern a protest and a warning against the neglect of some truth, or the undue repression of some principle, on the part of the Church, and that we may deplore the Dissent and yet take to heart the value of the principle for which in its day the sect contended before it separated from us. We may see for instance in Congregationalism a witness for the place of the laity in church government ; in Presbyterianism a witness for the rights of the second order of the ministry ; in Wesleyanism a witness for Church discipline ; while in all nonconformity we may read a protest and a warning, never more needed than at this moment, against the unwise enforcement of a harsh and pedantic uniformity ; thus we may learn from Dissent many a precious lesson, many a half-forgotten truth for our guidance as Churchmen, and so turn this hindrance into a real help to us in our ministry.

But when you have thus made fair and full allowance for all that can be said or felt on the side of Nonconformity, never for a moment seek to conciliate it by any surrender of Church principles. These are not yours to compliment away, and if they were you would gain nothing by their surrender. You will not gain unity, for, as I have said, the Dissenter no longer desires it. He is willing, or may be willing, to have evangelical alliance with you, but the idea of alliance is essentially opposed to that of unity. Alliance is a league between separate and independent states, each under its own government ; unity is the fusion of different portions of the same state under one government. There may be alliance between France and England just because there is no unity ; there cannot be alliance between England and Ireland unless you first repeal their union. Nor should we gain peace by giving up our essential principles ; for when we have elaborately and solemnly assured the Dissenter that there really is no essential difference between his system and ours, and that the Church and the sects are all equally churches, each with its own merits and its own defects, but with very little to choose between them after all—then, “in the name of common sense and justice,” would not his answer be, “why do you persist in claiming a position of inequality and of superiority over me? I can understand your claim to be the Church of the nation, if you say that your Church is better fitted to be so than our Churches ; but if we are all equally fitted for this, then your position as the National Church is an unreasonable inequality and a wrong.”

I confess that I do more justice to the good sense and self-respect of Nonconformists than to suppose that they can be won over to surrender their most cherished principles and convictions by the condescension of clergymen who benevolently preach in their pulpits or share in their services ; or if clergymen disclaim all idea of inequality, and come among them on a footing of

perfect ecclesiastical equality, I cannot but give the Dissenter credit for shrewdness enough to press the argument from this equality to its legitimate result. Neither as a Churchman, then, nor as the minister of an Established Church, can I see the right or the expediency of such coquetting with Dissent. As a Churchman I cannot pray against schism one day and promote it the next; as a minister of an Established Church, founded on the principle of religious inequality, I cannot make ostentatious proclamation of religious equality.

No, let us be true to our own principles; kindly, consistently, true to these; while, at the same time, we show all personal respect and brotherly love to those who are, most assuredly, our brethren in Christ, although our estranged and separated brethren, and whom we are bound to love and honour for their work's sake, though they walk not with us. I am persuaded that we shall win their respect and regard, and lessen their disposition, where it exists, to hinder our ministry, far more effectually by acting in this manner than by showing a weak and disloyal indifference to those essential principles which separate and must separate, Church and Dissent even when they do not socially separate Churchmen and Dissenters.

Labourers'
Unions.

Another hindrance to the ministry, reported to me, is the alienation of the labouring classes, caused by the Labourers' Union. The labourers and their representatives would, I presume, represent this matter differently, and would speak of the alienation caused by the conduct of the clergy with reference to the Labourers' Union. I think it quite possible that the latter view may be the true one, and yet that the clergy may be perfectly blameless in the matter. I set aside for the moment all the studious efforts made by those who, for their own purposes, are using this labourers' movement to inflame the mind of the labouring class against the clergy and the Church. Every political or social dissension will, of course, be availed of for their own purposes by men whose trade is politics, and it is as unreasonable to be surprised or annoyed at this as to be angry with the fly for breeding maggots in a sore. But, even had no such pains been taken to direct against the clergy the anger of the labouring classes—filled with a sense of wrong, and ready to turn against any one who might be pointed out to them as the cause of it—there is that in the attitude of the clergy in this dispute between the farmer and the labourer that must have in itself surprised and disappointed the latter. The attitude of the clergy in this dispute has in the main been that of strict neutrality. Some have warmly and earnestly championed the cause of the labourer, and some few have shown their sympathy on the other side. But, as a rule, the clergy have been fairly neutral, and such, I maintain, was the attitude which the clergy were bound

to maintain; not because their sympathies and their voice too, ought not to be always on the side of the wronged or the oppressed, but because they have no means of judging, there is nothing in their office that makes, or fits them to be, judges, as to which side in this dispute it is on which the wrong lies; or, even if they could judge of this, to decide the far more difficult question who, or what, was really the cause of this wrong. To decide the questions that arise in an old and complex society like ours between capital and labour; to say which has, in every such question, right on its side; is a question for statesmen and political economists and not for clergymen. Unions and strikes and lock-outs are the rough, painful processes, by which Labour and Capital attempt to bring their rival claims to an even and perfect balance; but he would be a bold and a rash man who would step in and try to adjust the weights, and hold the balance; those who have tried with the best intentions and greatest ability to do so in other trade disputes than this, have rarely been successful; and what is there, I ask, in the office of a clergyman that should specially fit him to do this? Why should it be his function, of all other men, to fix the price of labour in the business of agriculture? No one, that I am aware of, ever expected the clergy of our Church to interfere in this way in the trade disputes of the miner or the collier with their employers; why should they be supposed specially fitted and specially bound to do so in the dispute between the labourer and the farmer? And if they cannot fix it, if they are, of all men, perhaps the least fitted to fix it, how can they, with any advantage, interfere in the dispute respecting it? Their sympathies may be, and I am fully persuaded for the most part they are, with the labourer. Why should they be otherwise? The Church has nothing to gain by the sufferings of the poor. But this is not a question of sympathy, it is a question of political economy. It is a question, not whether it is not most desirable that the poor man should obtain a higher price for the commodity he has to sell—his labour, but whether that commodity is worth to the buyer what the vendor asks for it. And this, I maintain, is a question which the clergy as such are neither fitted nor called on to decide; and, therefore, it is not only their wisdom but their plain, honest duty, to stand neutral in the contest, for the simple reason that if they engage in it they may be guilty of injustice from their ignorance, and may only succeed in embittering a strife which they have really not the means of settling. The attitude of the Church, therefore, or rather of the clergy, in all such disputes is, I maintain, clearly one of strict neutrality. "Man, who made me a judge or a ruler over thee?" should still be their answer to him who would have them "speak to his brother, that he divide the inheritance with him."

Nevertheless, though this seem perfectly clear to our minds, it

is not to be expected that it will seem so to the labourer. He has known the clergyman all his life as his friend ; he has been in the habit of coming to him for sympathy in sorrow and help in adversity ; he never knew him other than kind and helpful ; he has had his advocacy with squire or farmer for many a kindness or indulgence in times past ; and now, when he is engaged in what he regards as a life and death struggle, he finds the clergyman declining to abet or to lead him. Naturally he is surprised and disappointed and angry, and naturally, also, he is only too ready to listen to those who tell him that the parson is, after all, his natural enemy, and the ally of his enemies the landlord and farmer, and that all his help in times past was only a better sort of bribery to bring him to the parson's Church, or his children to the parson's Sunday school. Such a feeling is, as I have said, natural, and it is in its very strength and bitterness an indirect testimony to the sense which the labouring man really had of the sympathy of his clergyman. Had he expected less of his pastor he would not have been so angry at his seeming desertion of him. The clergy might have avoided this estrangement, and won for themselves much cheap and dangerous popularity if they had come forward as the champions of the labourer and the assailants of the farmer. In the end they would but have embittered the strife in which they had thus injudiciously meddled. They would have exasperated one side without serving the other, and have destroyed their real influence and usefulness with both. I hold, then, that it is the duty of the parish clergyman to continue neutral in this strife as heretofore. But I also hold that he should take great care to let it be seen that he really is neutral, and why he is so. He must remember that as the friend and social companion of landlord or farmer, as himself also, sometimes a landlord and often an employer of labour, his judgment may be perhaps more than he is himself aware, enlisted on their side, and, at any rate, that he is specially liable to the accusation that it is so. He should take care, therefore, to make it clear to both parties in this dispute, but especially to the more ignorant and the weaker and more suffering of the two, what his attitude really is and why he has adopted it. He would do well to explain from the pulpit what is the place of the Christian minister in this as in any other dispute, in which it is not absolutely certain who is to blame : that his position is that of a mediator, a peacemaker, and not that of a judge, still less that of an advocate. He is to preach justice, moderation, charity to both of the disputants ; and, above all, he is to take care that no amount of abuse or slander of himself or his order, however irritating it may be, shall alienate him in heart from the poor of his flock. If he does this he will find that at last these will do him justice, and this temporary alienation will pass away. The labouring class are shrewder and fairer than many who speak in their name give them credit for being, and in the end they will not believe

on the authority of some unknown editor of some newspaper, that the man who has lived among them, it may be all their lives, and who has never failed to sympathise with and help them in times past, has suddenly become their bitter and tyrannical oppressor, or the cowardly and servile ally of their oppressors. Meanwhile we must only be patient, and certainly we must not attempt to cure this passing evil by turning demagogues and agitators, and by committing the Church in the persons of her ministers to a war of classes.

Intemperance occupies a prominent place among the hindrances to the ministry, of which the clergy complain. It is, indeed, a hindrance; the saddest, and alas! I fear the most hopeless of all that we have to encounter. There is no need that I should enlarge upon its evils; there is not a parish clergyman in this diocese who does not know them only too well, in all their dire extent of sin, and crime, and wretchedness. The question we have to consider is whether we are doing all that we might do, as ministers of Christ's Gospel, to check these evils; and if not, what more is there that we can and ought to do? Intemperance.

Let us ask, in the first place, are we plain and distinct enough in our denunciations of this vice of drunkenness in our pulpits? Are we indeed plain and distinct enough in our denunciations there of any vice or sin? I sometimes fear that we are not; I sometimes fear that one of the defects of modern preaching is its want of plain, direct, homely testimony, not against sin in general, but against *sins*, and against the sins of those whom the preacher is addressing; and that the pulpit is losing, in consequence, the great secret of its power, as the expression of the conscience of the Church, the utterance of that prophetic voice that cries aloud and spares not against all iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Let me press on you, my Reverend brethren, that if we would not hand over to the secular press one of the noblest functions of our office, we should be plain, bold, direct and impartial in our rebuking of vice from the pulpit. The most faithful of preaching, however, even if followed up by the sternest personal rebuke, will not, as I am sure many of you know, reclaim the drunkard. It may, however, help to preserve the sober, by creating in your parishes that tone of feeling respecting drunkenness, that reflection of the piety of the few in the morality of the many, to which in the main we must look for the repression of any national vice. And it is in this direction that I believe our efforts against intemperance should mainly be aimed. I do not, as you are probably aware, put much faith in legislation for the repression of drunkenness, or of any other kind of vice. My belief is that laws of this nature, to be successful, must be so stringent that the nation which would submit to them, from horror of the vice they restrained, would thereby show itself in little need of such restraint. The remedy for vice must come, not from laws,

but from the higher tone of public morals ; whatever we can do to elevate this will tend to repress intemperance far more effectually than any Liquor law or Permissive Bill. Make it as disgraceful among artisans and labourers for a man to be drunk, as it is now among gentlemen, and you will no more need legislation for the one than you now do for the other. This question, then, of the reform of intemperance is really not one question, but many. It is, of course, primarily a religious question, but it is also a question of sanitary regulation, of education, of Sunday observance, of Sunday recreation, of cheerful and healthy amusements for the people ; a question of decent houses for them to live in, and pure air to breathe, and fresh water to drink ; a question of reading-rooms, and lending libraries, and popular literature, and working men's clubs and refreshment-rooms ; a question, in short, that mixes itself up with all that directly or indirectly helps our labourers and artisans to lead wholesomer, purer, and happier lives. All that you can do therefore, or induce others to do, in this direction in your parishes, will be a real help to the removal of this great hindrance of intemperance from the way of your ministry. And in this way I think it is that temperance associations may be most valuable in your parishes : they will check intemperance if they are wisely worked, not merely, or perhaps mainly, by the vows they exact from their members ; but rather by the public opinion against it they may help to create, and by promoting, so far as they can, those indirect helps against it, of which I have spoken. I should be glad to see a temperance association worked for some such ends as these in every Rural Deanery, at least, in this diocese ; and I think it would be most unfortunate if the clergy of the National Church were to leave the formation or the guidance of such associations entirely to others, and so to lose, as they certainly would, much of their influence in their own parishes, by appearing to stand aloof from a question in which so many of their parishioners take so keen an interest.

As to the vexed question, between vows of temperance and vows of abstinence, let every man "be fully persuaded in his own mind." If any man believes that by total abstinence he can best help to reclaim an erring brother from sin, let him by all means vow to be abstinent. If any man believes that he can better attain this end by a vow of temperance, let him by all means vow to be temperate. Only let no man impose his rule of life in this respect as a duty upon another. Still less let any one elevate abstinence into an absolute rule of Christian life. To be "temperate in all things" is the duty of every Christian, to be abstinent in some things may become the duty of some Christians. But so long as the story of the miracle of Cana in Galilee remains in our Bibles, or the words "these thy creatures of bread and wine" in our Prayer-book, let no man, and above all no minister of the Church of England, teach that abstinence is a sacred duty for all, and temperance

only one remove from sin. To do this will not in the end promote the cause of temperance, but injure it. You will never succeed in making all men abstinent; but by setting abstinence before them as their only true rule, you may so degrade and depreciate temperance as to promote intemperance. Teach men that temperance is little better than drunkenness, and they will soon come to think that drunkenness is no worse than temperance. I am thankful therefore that the Church of England Temperance Association, which I have commended to your support in this diocese, has not made the mistake of confounding temperance with abstinence; but has left it free to its members to adopt, according to their judgment and conscience, either rule.

That the renting or appropriating of pews in parish churches is a most serious hindrance to the work of the ministry I entertain no doubt whatever. There is no need that I should point out the mischief arising from this injurious, and in most cases illegal, practice. It is one of the most hopeful signs for the future of our Church that the laity, with whom the reform of this evil through their representatives, the churchwardens, really rests, are beginning to understand how great a wrong is done to them by the permanent enclosure for the benefit of a favoured few, of that area of the parish church which is the common right of all. I wish, however, to point out to those laymen who are thus beginning to claim their rights in this matter, that these, like all other rights, involve corresponding duties, and that the lay duty which corresponds to the lay right of a free church, is the provision of an adequate endowment for the clergyman. Pew-rents in many churches, and I am sorry to say in many new ones, are the only provision for the clergyman's maintenance, and they are so simply because the laity have in such cases not come forward to provide an endowment. Now, I am aware that it is proposed that this difficulty should be got over by the clergyman "throwing himself," as it is called, "upon the offertory," and I know that some of the clergy have done this with a noble trust in the Christian liberality of their flocks which has not been always justified by the result. But I must plainly say that the laity have not the least right to claim any such self-sacrifice at the hands of the clergy. The reason why the parish church is free to all parishioners is just this, that the clergyman is supposed to derive his maintenance from the endowment of his parish; but a parish which provides no such endowments has no claim whatever to that free use of its parish church for which that endowment is really the consideration. It may be, and it is, most generous and self-sacrificing of the clergyman to waive this consideration, and to make the church free and open to the parishioners at his own cost and risk; but no society has any right to exist upon the sacrifices of its servants. Nor again, should the offertory, which

Pew-renting
and appropri-
ation.

is needed for the wants of the poor or the maintenance of the church, be unfairly burdened with the support of the minister. Free and open churches therefore, and the proper endowment of the ministry, should, I maintain, go hand in hand ; a fact which I think has been rather too much lost sight of by the advocates of free and open churches, and which, as the clergy may feel a natural reluctance to remind them of it, I take this opportunity of drawing attention to in their behalf.

So far we have been dealing with Church life and work, as you tell me it exists in your respective parishes. Let me, before I pass to the question of general church polity, say a few words to you regarding our life and work as a diocese. This is, I think, fairly progressive ; though it too has its hindrances and its defects which we have yet to try and amend.

Diocesan organization.

One change in our diocesan organisation since our last visitation, has been the creation of a third archdeaconry—a change which all who know the straggling and unwieldy character of this diocese, with the residence of the bishop at its remotest edge, will know was greatly needed. When the good and lamented Archdeacon Davys passed to his rest this year, I effected this change by dividing the Archdeaconry of Northampton into two portions ; one retaining the whole of south Northamptonshire and a small portion of the northern division of that county, to be the future Archdeaconry of Northampton ; the other to be called the Archdeaconry of Oakham, consisting of the greater portion of the northern division of the county of Northampton with the county of Rutland. I have been fortunate in obtaining for these new posts the services of two Archdeacons, one of whom is already well known to the clergy of this diocese as their valued and influential representative in Convocation, and the other of whom, well known in his own neighbourhood as a diligent and successful parish priest, brings to his office large experience formerly gathered as rural dean among the populous parishes of the diocese of Manchester. Both will, I am sure, be ere long appreciated and trusted by the Clergy and Churchwardens of this diocese as they already are by me.

In one important part of the work of the diocese I have lately introduced what I trust may prove a change for the better. It has long been the desire of bishops to give a deeper tone of devotion to the week that candidates spend with them before their ordination, and to make this less a time for examination, and more a season of preparation for the solemn moment of their entry on the office of the ministry in the Church of Christ. The difficulty, of course, has been to separate such preparation from the half-secular and distracting work of a literary and theological examination. Partly, however, by a system of examining candidate priests by means of

papers sent to them at intervals during their diaconate, and partly by the help of a Board of Theological Examiners for candidate deacons, established at Cambridge, whose certificate of proficiency in certain subjects I have in common with others of my episcopal brethren agreed to accept, I have been enabled to reserve the last two days of each ordination week for devotional exercises, and for addresses on pastoral work and cure of souls by Presbyters of standing and experience in the diocese.

The change has more than realised my anticipation in all its results, and I may add that it has been gladly welcomed by those Presbyters who have so kindly aided me in it by their words of loving counsel and encouragement addressed to the candidates, which I can assure them were gratefully received and appreciated by those to whom they spoke them.

Closely connected with this subject of ordination, there is, however, one matter which seems to me in urgent need of amendment, and to which I must call the special attention of Incumbents in this diocese. I find that in a considerable number of cases clergymen have been introduced amongst us, some on trial as curates, others in charge of parishes during the temporary absence of the incumbent, without my knowledge or sanction. Such a proceeding is, I need not say, entirely irregular. No curate can legally officiate in a diocese without the permission of the bishop,* and the necessity of such a rule has unhappily been only too clearly illustrated by the unfortunate results caused by the neglect of it. I have had, in the last three years, to deal with some very grievous cases of clerical scandal, nearly all of them occurring in the cases of clergymen brought into the diocese in the way I have spoken of. In every one of these cases the proper previous reference to me, and the power it would have given me to require sufficient testimonials, would have prevented the possibility of such scandals. Indeed, in some cases I could at once have informed the incumbent of the character of the man he was about to engage. The clergy of this diocese will therefore see, I trust, that even for their own sakes—to say nothing of the interests of their parishioners—I must require in future a strict observance in this matter of the rule of the Church. I cannot in future allow any clergyman, not having my license, to officiate in this diocese for more than two Sundays in succession without my consent previously obtained, not necessarily with a view to obtaining my license, nor even with a view to his producing formal testimonials, unless I should require them; but in order to give me an opportunity of informing myself by proper references as to his character and antecedents.

Our ruri-decanal and diocesan conferences are, I think, rooting themselves more broadly and deeply in the diocese, and drawing clergy and laity together in counsel on Church matters. I can

* See 48th Canon.

truly say for myself that I find year by year the increasing aid these conferences give me in the administration of this diocese, and in the part I am called on to take in legislation for the Church. I never felt their value more than I did last year, when, in the heat and violence of a bitter contest on a question that shook the Church to its centre, we were able to meet face to face, bishop, clergy, and representative laity, and discuss that question fairly and temperately together.

I feel, however, that our conferences still want improvement in the direction of greater freedom in the originating of discussions. I wish very much that individual members of the Conference would initiate subjects for discussion either by sending them to the committee of conference, or by bringing them before their own ruri-decanal conference, to be forwarded, if accepted there, on its behalf. There must be limits as to time, and some very broad ones as to fitness; but subject to these only, there is no reason why every member of our conference should not thus bring forward any question in which he feels a special interest. Our ruri-decanal chapters have been placed, at the request of our proctors in Convocation, in closer relation with that body by the arrangement, made with my hearty consent, that questions submitted by his grace the President for the consideration of the Lower House of Convocation, should be transmitted by our proctors to the chapters, for discussion. Slowly then, as I have said, but I think steadily and surely, our diocesan life is growing. We cannot yet legislate for the Church in our diocesan synods and chapters; but we can largely influence legislation, and have done so, in more than one important matter. Meanwhile we are preparing ourselves for a time when a larger measure of self-government may be allowed to or forced upon the Church. Much, however, is still needed in the way of this organisation of our diocese. I spoke, for instance, at last visitation of the advisableness of some system of diocesan finance—that is to say, of raising money systematically for recognised diocesan objects. This is still unattempted. Our diocesan religious inspection is still dependent upon an uncertain subscription list, which, in one archdeaconry, has shown signs of breaking down. We have no diocesan fund for the augmentation of smaller benefices, for spiritual aid in the diocese, for assistance to candidates for the ministry, or for a retiring fund for aged clergy. I earnestly hope that before our next visitation more than one of these desiderata may be supplied.

Ecclesiastical
Legislation.

Since last visitation we have had opportunity to test the working of several Acts of ecclesiastical legislation, then recently passed, and I think that, upon the whole, we have found these to be improvements on the preceding state of the law.

The Benefices Resignation Act has not been very largely availed of as yet amongst us, partly, I think, owing to what I

have already told you I regard as its too stringent provisions for the surrender in every case of the house of residence ; partly from the unwillingness of patrons to allow of the reduction in the selling value of their advowsons by the charge on the benefice for the pension of the retiring incumbent ; but mainly from the fact that a vast number of our livings are too small to allow at once of a retiring pension for the incumbent, and a sufficient income for his successor. I expressed last visitation a hope that this difficulty might be met by a diocesan superannuation fund. This has not yet been attempted ; but I am glad to find that the committee of the Curates' Augmentation Fund are considering, in the interests of the unbeneficed clergy, this question of increasing the pensions of incumbents who wish to resign. I trust they may be able to carry this idea into effect, for until it is effected on a large scale we must expect the clerical service to suffer, as any other of the public services would suffer in like case from the two evils arising from stagnant promotion,—namely the inefficiency of its older and the discontent of its younger members.

The Ecclesiastical Dilapidations Act undoubtedly needs some reform in detail, although it is in principle a great improvement upon the capricious and ineffective system it superseded. It necessarily bears hard however upon many who entered on their benefices under the old law, and who have vacated them under the new, and it has been my desire to use all the powers given me under the Act to soften its operation in such cases. I find that since it came into operation, the number of benefices inspected under it has amounted to 156, or more than one fourth of the entire number of benefices in the diocese. Of these, 8 only were inspected on complaint, 31 on request, 114 on vacancy, and 3 on sequestration. In 21 cases only were any objections made to the report of the surveyor, and of these 18 were more or less allowed by me ; a circumstance which I think testifies to the reasonableness on the whole both of surveyors and clergy, and to the fact that in the main the Act works fairly and reasonably.

I confess, however, that the Act seems to me to be tainted with the inherent vice of our whole law of dilapidations, namely that it proceeds on the false principle of placing on the incumbent the double responsibility both of landlord and tenant and of mulcting him in both capacities. A landlord who builds or repairs a house, receives his return for outlay of capital in the shape of increased rent ; and, on the other hand, the tenant who pays this rent has the right to call on the landlord to keep his house in tenantable repair. An incumbent however is required first to build or repair his house of residence, then to pay a rent for the cost of this in the shape of a charge on his benefice, and then, on his vacation of the benefice, he or his representatives pay again for the cost of putting the premises into more than tenantable repair for the benefit of the incoming tenant. This seems to me not only unreasonable in

principle, but inexpedient in practice, for it enlists all the feelings and interests of the tenant against the repair of dilapidations, whereas in all other cases of dilapidations it is the tenant's direct interest to ascertain them and demand their repair. I would alter this by simply placing the incumbent (of course not retrospectively) in the position of a tenant only, that is to say, I would have every incumbent pay an *ad valorem* charge upon his benefice to a diocesan dilapidation board, or to Queen Anne's Bounty Board, which should out of such payments provide for the expenses of insurance, periodical survey, and repairs of dilapidations, and so relieve the clergyman from all charge for dilapidation, except for wilful damage such as a surveyor could easily ascertain. The result of this arrangement would be, that it would become at once the interest of the clergyman to demand, instead of as now rather to resist survey of dilapidation, and that his payments for the cost of this would be made annually during his lifetime, while he was enjoying the revenues of his benefice, and would not fall in one large crushing sum, as these often now do, on his widow and orphans. Some such plan as this has actually been adopted I am informed in the disestablished Church of Ireland, and has been found to work well. I throw it out for the consideration of the clergy who may be dissatisfied with the working of the existing Act.

The present year has certainly not been fertile of ecclesiastical legislation; almost its only fruit has been the creation of one new bishopric, and the passing of a small measure relating to ecclesiastical fees, which gives promise of a larger, and, I trust, a satisfactory one next year. The Bill for the general increase of the Episcopate introduced in the House of Lords with the assent and support of the bishops who have most strangely been accused of hostility to it, passed without opposition, only to fall a victim to the obstructive ingenuity of the enemies of the Church in the Commons.

A Bill for affording Increased Facility for Public Worship reached and passed through the ordeal of a select committee, but proceeded no farther. And a Bill, introduced by myself, on the subject of Church patronage, the result of the labours of two select committees of the House of Lords, after passing late in the session, did not reach a second reading in the House of Commons.

The first of these measures has my warm and hearty concurrence, and I trust that, in common fairness to the Church, which only asks permission to tax itself for an addition to its episcopate which every one admits to be urgently needed, it may ere long be allowed to become law. The second, though containing, as it seems to me, some valuable provisions, may need very careful consideration, to secure that, while providing a remedy for obstructiveness and sloth in some parishes where this is sorely needed, it does not tend to produce chronic schism and strife in others by

an attempt to gratify, with rival places of worship in the same parish, the doctrinal preferences of different sections of the parishioners. The third of these has, since it passed the House of Lords, been made the subject of criticism and opposition of a kind which calls, I think, for some notice from me; not merely for my own vindication from much misstatement and misapprehension, but in the interests of Church reform, for the necessity of which this opposition seems to me to afford some very valuable evidence. In the first place, then, let me, in justice to my critics, set before you the picture of this Bill and of its history as they have lately given it.* It is as follows:—

The English episcopate, inflamed by “greed of patronage” and “dislike of lay influence” in the Church, as well as by a desire to “impoverish the poorer clergy,” and to “prevent,” in some mysterious way, “High Churchmen from obtaining preferment,” concocted a measure which should give them an “absolute veto” on all “lay patronage,” so as eventually to “transfer it all to themselves by the working of the law of lapse,” and thus “to fill their dioceses with their own creatures.” Having done this, they next proceeded, with a happy audacity, to make their attack on property and patronage in an assembly containing the most trained and accomplished legal guardians of property, and the largest owners of patronage in England; and so completely did they succeed in blinding the legal acumen of the one and the self-interest of the other, that they actually persuaded the great lawyers in that assembly to join them in their assault on property, and the great lay patrons to agree by large majorities to hand them over absolutely their patronage!

So crafty and daring a conspiracy of course deserved exposure, and it has accordingly received it in the shape of a shower of epithets such as—“dishonest,” “hypocritical,” “infamous,” “flagitious,” “tyrannous,” “cruel,” “absurd,” “unjust,” “mean,” “piratical,” “confiscating,” “revolutionary,” and the like, which, if epithets could prove anything, must have effectually exposed the true nature of this measure, the wickedness of its authors, and the imbecility of the assembly that gave its assent to it.

The real history of the measure is somewhat different from all this. The reform of the scandals and abuses connected with Church patronage was initiated, I am sorry to confess, not by bishops, but by laymen in the House of Commons, one of whom, now high in office in the State, succeeded in carrying through that House a Bill forbidding the sale of next Presenta-

* The quotations in this and in the following pages relating to Patronage are taken, partly from speeches delivered in the House of Lords, and at a public meeting of Patrons called for the purpose of organizing opposition to the Church Patronage Bill, partly from a pamphlet specially commended by the promoters of the aforesaid meeting, and partly from sundry letters from patrons which have appeared in the public papers.

tions. The question was next taken up by the Lower House of Convocation, which adopted a very able report upon the subject, presented by one of its committees, and accompanied it with the request that "the bishops would introduce into the legislature a Bill embodying the recommendations of the committee." And at last one of the bishops, moved thereto by several most distressing and even shocking cases of abuse of Church patronage occurring in his own experience, did proceed to embody these recommendations of Convocation in a Bill which, though shorn of some of its more important provisions, he succeeded in passing through two select committees of the House of Lords, on each of which bishops were in a small minority, and ultimately through that House itself.

How far these facts justify the accusations of a crafty conspiracy against lay patronage on the part of bishops, I leave to others to say. I will only remark upon them that, if bishops have thus conspired against the rights and interests both of the clergy and of the laity, they have been singularly fortunate in finding, as their abettors against the rights of the laity, the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and against the rights of the clergy the Lower House of Convocation.

As to the contents of this Bill, it may perhaps surprise many who have not read it, and have taken their impression of it from speeches and letters respecting it, to learn that so far from attacking "lay patronage," it has absolutely no special reference whatever to lay patronage. The only distinction that it makes, if it make any, in its dealings with patronage, being not between lay and clerical, but between public and private, or rather, between saleable and unsaleable patronage; a fact which is apparent enough when it is remembered that a great deal of public patronage is in lay hands, and that a large portion of private patronage is in the hands of clergymen. Secondly, that it made absolutely no distinction, in the form in which I introduced it, between public and private patronage, as to any of the restrictions that it imposed on the exercise of patronage. It imposed on public patrons, including bishops, the same disqualifications as regarded their presentees, the same declarations against simony, the same penalty for making that declaration falsely, the same right of objection on the part of parishioners, that it imposed on private patrons, and which are described by some of the latter as intolerable "indignities," specially inflicted on them alone. And thirdly, that so far from conferring invidious privileges on episcopal patrons, or from "being designed to give them," as has been alleged, with an astounding disregard of common truth and decency, "the power to obtain the livings of private patrons by the law of lapse," it actually contained a provision expressly barring the bishop from taking any such advantage of this law of lapse. It also, as I introduced it, gave a power to the parishioners of entering a

caveat against any appointment by the Bishop, on precisely the same grounds as those on which a Bishop might object to the presentee of a public or private patron—the same right, in fact, to “refuse” a Bishop’s presentee that he has to “refuse” the patron’s presentee—namely, no “veto,”* as has been alleged, but only a right to make good certain legal grounds of objection in a court of law. I wish to draw especial attention to this last-mentioned feature in the Bill, because it has been made matter of special objection to it, that, while enlarging the area of Bishops’ objections to the presentees of all other patrons, it made no provision for objections by any one to the appointments made by Bishops themselves. Now, as I had from the first admitted that there appeared to me to be this defect in our existing system of checks upon improper appointments by patrons, that no such checks existed when the Bishop appointed, I was careful accordingly to provide one, and a very efficient one, by giving to parishioners this right of objecting to the presentees of all patrons—Bishops, of course, included—and by providing them with means of proving their objections in a court of law, and also by imposing on the Bishops, as well as on all other patrons, the stringent declaration against simony which the Bill originally contained. Both these provisions were, however, struck out of the Bill, at the instance, not of Bishops, but of lay members of the House of Lords. The fact, however, stands on record, that I was perfectly willing and still am willing to impose, and that the Bishops were perfectly willing to accept, every restriction on the exercise of our patronage that may be imposed on that of any other patrons, public or private.

And now as to the real principles and objects of this Bill. Its principle is simply this: that patronage of all kinds whatsoever is a sacred trust; that a patron is a person charged with a most

* The impression that the Bill gives to Bishops a veto on the presentations of patrons has probably arisen in some minds from the form in which the power of objecting to presentees is given, in certain clauses of it, to the Bishop, viz., “The Bishop may refuse to institute.” These words, however, convey no “veto.” They merely entitle the Bishop to refuse institution on certain new grounds, subject to the same condition under which he may now refuse on certain other grounds; that condition being that he make good at his own risk, in a court of law, the grounds on which he has refused institution; or, in other words, the Bill in these clauses enlarges the existing area of objections to presentees on the part of the Bishop; but it gives him only a right of objection qualified by the check of one lawsuit on the part of the patron, and of another on the part of the presentee, involving the certainty, therefore, of heavy costs in the event of the objection having been wrongfully made. Whether these additional grounds of objection are or are not reasonable ones, whether, for instance, it is or is not reasonable to require that a presenter shall be bodily and mentally capable of discharging the duties of his office, or that he should produce sufficient testimonials to character, is, of course, matter of opinion; but that these words, “refuse to institute,” give no “veto” to Bishops, is simply a matter of fact.

solemn and responsible duty, that of selecting a fitting person for a most important public office, that office being nothing less than "the cure and government of the souls of the parishioners" for whom he has to make this selection; and that whatever gain or advantage, direct or indirect, may originally be inherent in, or may have attached itself in course of time to, this trusteeship, must be regarded as subordinate to this primary object of the trust; and that to neglect this duty of selection, and still more to exercise it with regard only to his own private interests and without regard to those of the parishioners, is nothing less than a deliberate and sinful breach of trust. As such, I am thankful to say, the law both of the Church and of the land has always regarded patronage. It has never treated it simply as a contrivance for enriching patrons, to be used by them simply and solely for that end. It has stamped indelibly, by every one of its enactments respecting it, this character of trusteeship on the office of the patron—by the law of lapse, which provides that if he neglect to perform his duty of selection under the trust, another shall step in and discharge it in his stead; by the laws against simony, which forbid as a "detestable sin" any corrupt exercise of his trust; and by the law which aims at preventing an unwise or ignorant exercise of it, by giving to the Bishop the right to test within certain limits the qualifications of his presentee before granting him the institution which he must ask at his hands. Neither Church nor State in this country has, therefore, yet accepted the monstrous theory of patronage which has been recently propounded by certain patrons. That patronage, or rather one particular kind of patronage, namely, that which has been acquired by money, should, merely because it has been so acquired, be regarded as property pure and simple, and should be free from all those restrictions which give it the character of a trust; that as regards it and it alone it would seem the law of lapse is "cruel," and the laws against simony on a par with those "against witchcraft;" that, as regards the "public merit" of the person selected by the patron, that is a question which "he cannot afford to consider," and that it is "absurd" to require him to do so, inasmuch as this fitness is "amply guaranteed by the fact that all such persons must be in holy orders," and that accordingly his duty as patron "is fully discharged when he submits the name of an ordained clergyman" to the Bishop for institution; or, in other words, for it comes to this, that any man in England (not being a Roman Catholic), no matter how immoral, ignorant, or incompetent he may be, who may have purchased in the auction mart a right of patronage, ought, in consideration of the money he has paid for that right, to be allowed to thrust into the unhappy parish over which he has acquired it any man, however immoral, ignorant, or incompetent he may be, provided only that he have, it may be fifty or sixty years before, obtained holy orders; and further, that for a Bishop to require from the

presentee of such a patron any test of his fitness is absolutely "absurd."

On the sordid cynicism of this repudiation of the very idea of trust in connection with patronage I make no comment; I leave it to the conscience of the Church. But I may be allowed to ask, What, on this theory of patronage, is the use of patrons? If any clergyman, simply because he is a clergyman, is fitted for any benefice in the English Church, why should there be any persons, charged with the lucrative duty of selecting clergymen for benefices? The appearance of the patron on the stage is in that case a mere impertinence, and an "indignity" to the clergyman. Why should not the nonimation to every benefice, when vacant, be sold by auction to the highest bidder, who should thereupon be entitled to enter on the duties of his sacred office unembarrassed by disrespectful inquiries as to his fitness for it?

I cite this very peculiar theory as to patronage, however, not so much for the purpose of seriously discussing it, as for that of drawing public attention to the proof which it affords of the necessity for seeing that due safeguards are provided against the carrying of it out into actual practice in the parishes of our Church. For it is clear that the more completely this office of patron is thrown open to public sale, quite irrespective of the character of those who thus acquire it, and the more openly all idea of trust in the discharge of the office is repudiated by certain of those who do thus acquire it, the more need there is for seeing that the interests of the parishioners, for the sake of which that office exists, are duly cared for by some one; and that whoever is charged with this duty of protecting them should have amply sufficient means for doing so. Nor can I see what "indignity" there is to patrons in this, least of all to those patrons who take that strictly commercial view of their office which I have been describing. For if patronage be, what these men would have it, purely a trade and business, in which the sacred right of the tradesmen is, as alleged, "to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market," why should such dealers in the article of patronage object, on the score of their "dignity," to such restrictions being applied to their trade as are applied to so many other trades? If it be no "injury" to the purveyor of food, or drugs, or liquor, to forbid him, in the interests of public health, to adulterate his goods, and no "indignity" to appoint inspectors to see that he does not do this, why should it be an injury or an indignity to impose the like restrictions and take the like securities in the case of the man who claims to be only a purveyor of clergymen, and who openly declares that he conducts his business on the principle of *caveat emptor*, and that he "cannot afford" to conduct it otherwise? I can understand a tradesman standing on his character, and protesting against all inspection of his goods accordingly; though as a rule it is, I think, the most honest tradesman who

is most willing to submit to the testing of his goods: or I can understand his saying, As you have appointed inspectors of my goods, the rest is your affair, let the inspector look to it, I will only look after my profits; though in that case I think there is good need for ample powers of inspection. But I cannot understand his taking, as these particular tradesmen do, both these lines at the same time; declaring in the same breath that he regards his right of patronage merely as a profitable investment for his money, and that the fitness of the clergyman whom he provides in the way of business is the affair of the Bishop, and none of his; and, at the same time, standing upon his character, and complaining of the attempt on the part of the Bishop sufficiently to inspect his wares as a grievous wrong and indignity. I maintain, therefore, that not only the nature of the case, as regards the present absolutely unqualified right to buy and sell patronage, but also the not very exalted trade maxims announced by certain patrons as those on which they claim to carry on their trade, make it imperatively necessary to see that this trade is conducted under proper regulations, and that due security be taken in the interests of parishioners that these trading patrons are not allowed, in order to enhance their profits, to foist damaged articles on those who are compelled to receive them at their hands.

And this is the object of my Bill. It leaves entirely untouched, I regret to say, the sale of the office of patron, even as regards next presentations. It is not my fault that it does so. I deplore it. I regard it as the weak point of this measure, that it leaves it free to the patron not merely to divest himself altogether of his trust, with all its accompanying lucrative privileges, but, while still retaining these, to invite any one who will pay him for it to take a turn of his office, and to discharge in his place the solemn and awfully responsible duties of his trust. Nevertheless, if it does leave these sales of next presentations intact, for that very reason it proceeds to make the safeguards against unfit appointments—so needful under such circumstances—sufficient; and the only question, with those, at least, who admit that there should be some safeguards, is, whether those already existing are or are not sufficient.

My answer to this question shall be the statement of the following facts:—

First, there are one hundred patrons in England, not presumably better or wiser than other patrons, who have the right to keep the parishes in their gift as long as they please without a pastor, who, when he is appointed, need produce no evidence that he is even in holy orders, no testimonial as to his character, and who may buy from one of these patrons the right, without check, hindrance, or so much as question from any human being, to enter upon a cure of souls, and who, moreover, by that purchase, may have been enabled to complete some nefarious

transaction respecting some other piece of Church preferment of which he may be the owner. I propose that this mischievous and unreasonable privilege of donatives be abolished, and that all owners of donatives be required to submit their presentees to such tests as are required of the presentees of all other patrons.

Again, it is a fact that a certain number of patrons are in the habit, whenever their livings fall vacant, of selecting the oldest and most decrepit clergymen they can find, after the most careful search and inquiry, and putting them into their livings in order to enhance the selling value of these in the market; a proceeding which I regard as one of deliberate and enormous wickedness, and yet which, at present, may be, and is, adopted in defiance of parishioners and of Bishop, for there are absolutely no limits in law to the age or decrepitude of a presentee. I ask that a Bishop shall have power to object to a presentee who is thus "bodily or mentally incapable of performing the duties of his office," or to refuse institution to one who is over seventy-five years of age.*

Again, it is a fact that any parishioner knowing of any immorality in the clergyman about to be appointed to his parish dare not represent it to the Bishop, through dread of an action for libel. I ask that he be protected in this respect, as he is protected in objecting to illegal marriages or to the ordination of unfit clergymen, the Bishop, of course, taking all the responsibility of acting on his report, and of proving it by his evidence in open court.

Again, it is a fact that immoral and scandalous clerks are sometimes presented, as I personally know, to Bishops for institution by patrons who are well aware of their character. I

* It has been objected to the clause enacting this limitation on the age of a presentee, that it allows of a Bishop waiving it "if he think fit," and therefore allows him where he is patron to collate a clergyman over seventy-five years of age, "provided he will be his creature." And this is accordingly one of the proofs adduced of the dishonest intention of the Bill. The simple truth of the matter is this:—I originally designed a twofold and absolute restriction as to the age of all presentees of all patrons: one that this should not be under twenty-seven, the other that it should not be over seventy years. The former (and I confess, to my mind, far the more valuable restriction of the two) was rejected by a select committee of the Lords; the latter, altered to seventy-five years, was adopted. As it was, however, objected to the absolute character of the clause that there might be cases in which a clergyman over seventy-five years of age might be capable of discharging efficiently the duties of some not very laborious parish, this clause was further qualified by allowing the Bishop a discretion in the matter, and not making the prohibition absolute. This discretion, therefore, was not introduced in favour of Bishops, who, I may remark, are not in the habit of appointing to benefices clergymen over seventy-five years of age, but really in favour of the aged clergyman and the private patron. I should, however, rejoice to see this prohibition made absolute, and the minimum limit of age replaced in the bill, for certainly, of all restrictions upon presentees, that seems to me the most reasonable which requires that before a man undertakes an important public office, he shall have had a reasonable acquaintance with its duties. I may add that the principle of this limitation has already been recognised in the law regulating cathedral patronage.

ask that the Bishop shall have the right to demand of all presentees "sufficient testimony" to character. And these are absolutely all the additional restrictions as to the fitness of presentees imposed in my Bill, and every one of these, be it remembered, I would impose on public and episcopal as well as on private patrons.

Again, it is a fact that an infant in his cradle may be nominated to the largest and most populous parish in England, that it shall be kept open for him by a resignation bond until he attains the ripe age of twenty-four, when he forthwith enters upon the duties of the parish, the temporary incumbent being turned out to make room for him; or, if he is not at once removed, remaining the life-tenant of the patron, and liable to ejection at any moment. I ask that this very modern change in the law in favour of nepotism be abolished, and that patrons be in future required not to nominate infants, but to select fit pastors for the benefices in their gift.

I ask, too, that the law against simony shall no longer be allowed to be ingeniously evaded by arrangements for the payment of interest on purchase money of advowsons; and, lastly, that the light of publicity be thrown by registration on sales of preferment which we now see announced as to be effected with that "strictest confidence" and most careful secrecy which are not generally observed in any traffic that can bear the light.

I see, I confess, no such violent unreasonableness, or tyranny, or robbery, in all this, as some parties profess to see. I see only the most moderate safeguards against scandals and abuses which have long been the shame and the weakness of our Church; safeguards which, as I have said, are not the invention of Bishops, but which have been urged upon them by those who have most carefully studied this subject, and which have been adopted after most mature inquiry and deliberation by an assembly not generally supposed to favour measures of revolution or confiscation.

And now let me add to this statement of facts as to the present condition of our laws relating to Church Patronage a statement of facts as to the working of these laws, for which I can personally vouch. Since I have been a Bishop I have been called upon to institute four clergymen, of whom one was paralytic; another so aged and infirm that, on the ground of his age and infirmity, he asked me for leave of perpetual absence from the important parish to which I had just instituted him; a third was a reclaimed drunkard, who was presented to a benefice situated only a few miles from the scene of his former intemperance, and where the scandal of it was unhappily notorious; the fourth (I can hardly bring myself to say it), had resigned a public office he had formerly held sooner than face an investigation into a charge of the most horrible immorality, the truth of which he did not dare to deny to me. *In each of these cases the facts were perfectly well known to the respective patrons.*

As regards every one of these I was advised that I had no legal power to refuse institution ; and, as regards the last, it is simply a fact that the man to whom, at the risk of a law-suit, I refused institution, could, the next day, have bought across a counter in London—with the same ease and with more secrecy than he could have bought a railway ticket—a cure of souls in the shape of a donative, on which he might at once have entered without any human being having the right to ask him so much as a single question. For aught I know to the contrary, he may have done this, and that miserable man, stained as he is, by his own confession, with nameless vice, may now be the beneficed and irremovable minister of a parish in the Church of England !

Shocked by such facts as these, and knowing that they are by no means solitary ones in our Church, I ask for a committee of the House of Lords to investigate the state of the law which allows of them ; I prove to the satisfaction of that committee that the law is just what I was advised it was, that a Bishop is at present absolutely powerless to prevent such frightful scandals as these and others of which I produce the clearest evidence ; I obtain the unanimous verdict of the committee that the present state of the law is “ in great need of revision ; ” I embody in a Bill those revisions which this committee declare to be thus urgently necessary ; and I am forthwith greeted with a cry of horror and indignation, as if I had committed sacrilege. I am warned by one defender of the system which permits these shameful iniquities, that forsooth “ the ministry must be a gentlemanly profession,” “ must not be too ascetic,” but must be tempered with a “ certain reasonable amount of secularity,” gentility, I suppose, being regarded as having a special vested interest in paralysis, decrepitude, intemperance, and immorality ; I am told by a whole chorus of its other defenders that this right of patrons to intrude paralytic, incompetent, and scandalous clerks on parishes is of the sacred nature of property, and that to interfere with it is piracy and confiscation !

I confess that as I cite the facts that I have now narrated, I hardly know which to be most ashamed of—that evils so scandalous, abuses so notorious, as those I have described and proved, should exist in our Church beneath the shelter of its laws, or that there should be clergymen and gentlemen capable of publicly defending them. I hardly know which fact is most discreditable to us as a branch of His Church who once scourged money-changers from His temple—that, by the help of a few pieces of silver, worse men than he who betrayed Him may find or force their way to minister at her altars—or that there should be those amongst us who, for the sake of those pieces of silver, should struggle to keep the doors of the sanctuary wide open for their admittance.

But I have yet to consider this plea of property which is set up in opposition to these righteous and most needful reforms. Gross as the abuses I have described are, and are admitted to be, I am told that the right to perpetrate them is a property right; that money having been invested in the purchase of advowsons under a state of law which allowed of these abuses, to alter the law now would, or might at least, lower the selling value of them, and that we must not, therefore, make these reforms, unless we first compensate the owners of advowsons. Now, I might reply to this plea that I do not believe that these reforms would lower the value of advowsons by a single shilling, and that the fear that it would is just one of those panics of property which have heralded nearly every reform of abuses, and which the result has in almost every case proved to be groundless. Or I might point out to the owners of this property what a powerful argument they are furnishing to those who oppose all sale of advowsons, by the proof they are giving that such traffic raises up a formidable barrier to the reform of the grossest abuses. I have, however, another and a simpler answer to this plea for compensation. I deny absolutely that it has the slightest validity. I maintain that the Legislature is not bound to compensate the owners of property, except when it takes that property away from them absolutely; and that it never has recognised a claim for compensation on the ground of the possible indirect depreciation of property which may result from its Acts. Such a claim would make nearly all legislation, and certainly all legislative reforms, impossible. There is not a session of Parliament in which the Legislature does not pass many Acts which indirectly affect many different kinds of property, enhancing the value of some, depreciating that of others, but which no one has ever supposed gave, in the latter case, a claim to the owners for compensation, and that for the following good and sufficient reasons:—First, that all property is bought, subject to the incident of fluctuation in its marketable value, either of rise or fall according to circumstances, and that it forms no part of the duty of the Legislature so to regulate these circumstances as to insure that every man shall obtain for his property in the market no less a price than that he originally paid for it. Secondly, that the alleged depreciation is a purely speculative one, and might, after all, never occur. And thirdly, that it is impossible practically to estimate the amount of such alleged depreciation. Who is to prove in any case of depreciation of value of property, for instance, occurring subsequently to an Act of the Legislature, how much of this exactly is owing to the change of the law, and how much to quite other and different circumstances?

The Legislature therefore, I repeat it, has never admitted such purely speculative and often imaginary claims for compensation to operate as a hindrance to its path of reform. When it

directly takes away property it compensates ; when it indirectly depreciates, or when owners of property think that it may indirectly depreciate, their interests, it never does compensate ; and most certainly it never does so when its only interference with property is to prevent the owner from using it to the injury of others. For instance, when the Legislature forbid lodging-house keepers to overcrowd their houses, and required them to make costly improvements in their premises in the interests of health and decency ; or when it required manufacturers to consume their own smoke, or to refrain from polluting rivers with their refuse, did ever any one hear of the owners of such property making a claim for compensation on the ground that they had invested property in these cases under other conditions, and that the Legislature, having imposed new restrictions, must compensate them for the injuries to their property ? Or, to take a still more recent instance :—

The Legislature passed this year an Act, which increased the powers of the Board of Trade for the inspection of merchant ships, enabling them to prevent practices not hitherto illegal, but found dangerous to human life. What would have been said if the shipping interest had set up a cry of “confiscation,” on the ground that, having bought their ships free from all such restrictions, the imposing of these upon them by the Legislature would tend to depreciate the selling value of their property ? If we could imagine such claims as these being set up, would not the answer be, You are asking compensation for the right of putting your property to an evil and injurious use ; for the right to make shipwrecks, to breed pestilence, or to poison the air we breathe and the water we drink ? No man has a right to claim compensation on such grounds as these, and you shall have none such at our hands. And what I ask is the difference in principle between such claims as these, and the claims of those who assert that, whereas they now have the right to make shipwreck of souls, to poison the spiritual life of a whole parish, and whereas the State proposes to interfere and to prevent them from doing this wrong, they must be compensated for the loss of these sacred privileges ? My answer to such a claim is simply this :—You are asking compensation for the loss of an immoral increment, and your claim is as immoral as the gain which you say will be lost to you. I ask you, if you have the courage to do so, to state plainly the items for which you claim compensation : as, for instance—for the privilege of forcing on a parish a paralytic pastor, so much ; for the right to appoint a clergyman so scandalous that he cannot bring sufficient testimonials to his character, so much ; for the right to appoint an octogenarian clergyman, in order to sell the living over his head, so much ; and for the right generally to hurt the souls of parishioners for the sake of our own private gain, so much—and let us see what the answer of the Legislature will be to such a claim. It might be given in one sentence. Either the higher value of your adowsons is

owing to these privileges of doing what is wrong and injurious to public welfare, or it is not; if it is, you are entitled to no compensation; if it is not, you will have received no injury; in either case your claim for compensation and your cry of robbery are monstrous, and not to be listened to for a moment.

One argument, however, which is brought forward as a complete and conclusive answer to all I have been saying, I must proceed to notice. It is that derived from the alleged nepotism of public patrons, and especially of Bishops, which I am warned is to be inquired into and fully exposed if I venture to proceed further with this Bill, and the existence of which is asserted to be an ample reason why no such Bill should ever have been introduced. I confess that I feel the force of this argument as little as I do that of the threat which accompanies it. So far as the latter is concerned, nothing would please me, or I venture to think my Right Reverend brethren, better than a full and searching inquiry into the manner in which episcopal patronage is at this moment exercised; it would tend I think to silence a good deal of very reckless slander now existing on the subject, and I shall heartily second every attempt in this direction, even though it be made by those who, while denouncing nepotism in Bishops as a grievous sin, claim it on the part of the private patron as a most sacred privilege, of which it is robbery to deprive him.

Let us see, however, what is the exact value of this accusation of nepotism against public patrons, as an argument against all reform in Church patronage. And first let me ask, What is nepotism? Nepotism is not merely the giving of preferment to a patron's relatives, for I see no reason why these should, if otherwise fitting, be debarred from preferment on that ground: it is the appointment of them in preference to other and better-fitted men, or men who have longer claims of service in the Church. Undoubtedly such nepotism is a very grave breach of trust on the part of any patron; just as much, however, in my opinion, in a private as in a public patron; for I cannot see that a breach of trust is less a breach of trust when it is committed by a trustee who has bought his trusteeship than by one who has not. All patrons are equally trustees, and if anything, the fault of nepotism is greater in the trustee who can sell his trusteeship, and so provide for his relation, than in one who cannot do so. It is a very great fault, however, in either; nevertheless, it is a fault which it seems to me almost impossible to touch by legislation. I attempted to reach it in two ways in my Bill; first by forbidding the appointment to benefices of clergymen who had not served a certain number of years in the Church, and secondly, by imposing a stringent declaration against simony on the patron as well as on the presentee. Both of these reforms were opposed, however, as I have said, not by public, but by private patrons, on the ground that they did interfere with nepotism; and neither would, I fear, have effectually checked an

evil which is inherent in all patronage, and in human nature itself.

But how, let me ask, is the existence of an evil, which it is, I fear, practically impossible to cure by legislation, a reason for not dealing with certain other evils which the Legislature can easily reach? As a mere *tu quoque* this accusation of nepotism against public patrons might have some force, were it not that the offence is so much more rife amongst private than amongst public patrons; but we cannot legislate on *tu quoques*. In any other point of view the argument amounts to this—All patrons, public and private, are tempted unduly to prefer their own relations: *therefore*, let unbounded facilities be left to all patrons for preferring their relations, when they are scandalous, immoral, and incompetent; or—All patrons may be guilty of nepotism; some, in addition to nepotism, are guilty of presenting, for corrupt considerations, scandalous and decrepit clerks who are in no way related to them; *therefore*, let these patrons be protected in these practices. I should have thought the argument was the other way, and that if all patrons are disposed unduly to promote their relatives, for that very reason the more care should be taken to see that at least those relatives are proper men; and that if all patrons may be guilty of nepotism, and some of nepotism and simony to boot, that the fact that we could not prevent the nepotism was no good reason why we should not reform the simony. As to the argument that poor curates “have not the least chance of livings from a Bishop unless related to, or having interest with him,” and therefore must be allowed to obtain them from those disinterested patrons who never, I presume, give them to their own relatives, I have only to say that, quite apart from its intrinsic falsehood, it comes oddly from those who clamour against the idea of cheapening the market price of advowsons.

My answer to all this cry against prevalent episcopal nepotism is, in the first place, that it is untrue, and that I invite investigation as to its truth; secondly, that if true it would be quite beside the question as to the need for preventing the appointment of scandalous and incompetent clergymen to benefices; and lastly, that so far from wishing to shield nepotism on the part of public patrons, I have shown myself willing, and am still heartily willing, to introduce into any measure I may bring forward for the reform of patronage, any clause that can effectually prevent or check nepotism; and I venture to prophesy that if I do so the opposition to it will not come, as it hitherto has not come, from Bishops.

And now that I have dealt thus at length with the opposition to reform from some interested patrons, I wish to say how entirely I acquit the great body of patrons in England of any sympathy with the views I have been describing. I know what a generous and hearty support I have received from many private patrons, both in and out of Parliament. I know how many such there are who

would repudiate with indignation the degrading conception of their duties put forth in their name, and who have a true sense of the real dignity as well as the responsibility of their office. It is to such patrons that from the first I have appealed for help in the effort to reform abuses which I know they loathe as much as I do. I do not, I earnestly trust the Church and the Nation may not, confound private patronage with these theories of certain private patrons; if they should, its days are numbered. Once let the people of this country come to believe that private patronage means the intrusion of unfit men for money upon helpless parishioners, and they will deal with the question in a far rougher and more sweeping way than I have done. Let the claimants for mere property in patronage beware of this, or they may one day discover, to their cost, that the truest defence of property is not that which identifies it with, but that which frees it from, abuses. I am no enemy, as I am accused of being, to private patronage; on the contrary, I highly value it, and I should deplore its abolition as a very serious calamity. I desire to preserve it to our Church. For that very reason I entreat the help of all high-minded and conscientious patrons in cleansing it from those shameful scandals which some of their order would fain perpetuate, and the perpetuation of which is its greatest peril. Whether I shall be successful in this effort or not remains yet to be seen. I shall succeed if Churchmen really desire that I should, I shall fail if they do not; for no individual can fight single-handed and unsupported against abuses so long established and so powerfully supported as those I have assailed. And the measure I have brought forward is, I am well aware, exposed to this danger, that while it goes far enough to provoke opposition, it does not go far enough to excite enthusiasm in its support. Had it really been the sweeping measure it is accused of being, it would have had larger help from without; its danger lies in its moderation. But its failure, if it should eventually fail, will not be the failure of the cause in which I have brought it forward; it may be even its best help. The fact that a most moderate measure of reform of a very great evil had failed from interested opposition and languid support, may be just what was wanted to give a fresh impetus to the cause, which may carry even larger reforms than those which I have proposed. In either case I can truly say, *Liberavi animam meam*. Moved by a deep conviction of the sin and the peril of neglecting any longer the reform of one of the greatest "sores and sins" of our Church, I have, in the face of great difficulties and powerful opposition, honestly endeavoured to effect this reform. Come what may of my attempt, I am thankful I have made it; it will in any case have helped towards the ultimate triumph of the cause for which I have striven. For the time will yet come, I am persuaded, and that ere long, when the voice of the Church will demand in a manner unmistakable and irresistible the removal of all those scandals and abuses in this matter of patronage that are

now degrading and weakening her; and when that time does come men will wonder how these evils could have been endured so long, or how at last they could have been so quickly and so completely swept away.

I have reserved for the last the consideration of the Act for the Better Regulation of the Laws of Public Worship, which, after an almost wasted interval granted for the revision of the laws which it was designed to enforce, has lately come into operation. It is, happily, unnecessary for me to revive the embittered controversies of last year by discussing again the principles of this Act, or the reasons which, as I then thought and still think, made its introduction an unfortunate but imperative necessity. These questions were fully and freely discussed in our diocesan conference, when the measure was passing through Parliament; and I have seen no reason to change the opinions respecting them which I then expressed, and which, I am glad to remember, seemed then to meet with considerable acceptance. I wish, however, to take this opportunity of protesting against being held in any way responsible for any opinions which others may have expressed as to what this Act was or was not intended to effect. Nothing of this nature can in any way concern or control me as Bishop of this diocese; and certainly it can in no way affect the meaning or intent of the Act itself. That is to be gathered, not from the speeches of its supporters or opponents in or out of Parliament, but from its own express words as they stand upon the statute-book. And, judged by these, I cannot but regard it as likely generally to disappoint the expectations both of friends and of foes.

Public Worship
Regulation Act.

It is, as I understand it, and certainly as I intend to administer it, simply an Act which provides for the cheaper and speedier interpretation and enforcement of the laws of the Church respecting ritual. It neither adds to, nor takes away from, nor interprets any one of these. I cannot see, therefore, how it can possibly have the effect of "putting down" any party or person in the Church that does not persist in wilfully and contemptuously breaking her laws; and certainly I cannot see why it should be regarded as intended or as likely to result in the enforcement of any particular legal judgment—as, for instance, the Purchas judgment. For, if it provides for anything, it provides for the speedy rehearing of the questions dealt with in that judgment. And if this be, as is now contended with great ability and learning, an unsound one, and certain to be reversed upon a rehearing, surely those who think so should of all others be the first to hail with satisfaction a measure which enables them quickly and cheaply to obtain a reversal of what they regard as a miscarriage of justice.

But be the result of this Act what it may, of one thing I am

certain, that it cannot possibly bring us into a worse state than that in which it found us : a state of things which was rapidly coming to this—that every clergyman in the Church of England might do what was right in his own eyes ; there being, as regards some of her rubrics, no definite law to guide him if he desired to obey, and, as regards all of them, virtually no power to compel his obedience if he chose to disobey them ; while, at the same time, certain of the clergy were openly declaring that legal compulsion, which they perfectly well knew was practically impossible, was the only form in which they would consent to be governed by their Bishops. A state of things, in short, in which we were suffering from two of the worst evils that can affect any community—ambiguous and obsolete laws and a weak executive ; and in which the government of the Church was fast passing, as in such cases government was sure to pass, from the paralyzed hands of legitimate rulers into the hands of powerful, but irresponsible, associations of private individuals, formed nominally for the maintenance or enforcement of the law, practically to carry out in the name of the law a bitter and schismatical strife, which was rapidly rending the Church in twain, and making her a scorn and derision to her enemies round about. Even if this Act, then, were, as some allege, only a means of supplying these combatants with sharper weapons—even if it contained no provisions for enabling the natural rulers of the Church to act as mediators and peacemakers between these contending parties—still it may have this effect, that by its cheaper and quicker processes it may bring this unseemly contest to a speedier end. Bitterer, fiercer, more discreditable to our common Christianity than it now is, it can hardly possibly become. It is, at least, some comfort for all who long for peace to think that if it cannot be softened, there is some prospect of its being shortened. I cannot but hope, therefore, that the result of this Act may eventually be peace, even if this be purchased by a preceding interval of sharper warfare.

Our present concern, however, is neither with the past history nor probable results of this Act, but with its existing provisions, and with the manner in which it is to be administered in this diocese.

On both of these points, and especially on the latter, you have the right to expect from me the fullest and clearest explanation. Before I attempt this, however, let me ask you to consider with me the larger question, What are the principles on which a Bishop of the Church of England should aim at administering her laws of ritual ? For if I can succeed in obtaining your assent to my statement of general principles on this subject, I shall, I trust, have little difficulty in showing you that this Act makes, so far as I am concerned, no change in these, but leaves me free to carry out that rule of government respecting ritual, under which

we have hitherto enjoyed a large measure of peace, such as, I hope and trust, we may continue to enjoy in years to come.

How, then, should a Bishop administer the Church's laws of worship? I am aware that there are those to whom this will appear a very idle and superfluous inquiry. The rubrics, such persons are fond of reminding us, are simply "the law" both of Church and State; as such, the clergy are bound, both as ministers of the Church and as citizens of the State, to yield them implicit obedience; and it is the clear duty of Bishops to require them to do this, and to punish them if they do not. What else, we are asked, are Bishops, and Courts Ecclesiastical, and Acts of Uniformity for, if not for this? And vehement, accordingly, have been the accusations of cowardice or treachery brought against Bishops for failing to do their duty in this matter by "enforcing the law."

Others there are, again, who from quite another point of view regard this matter as almost equally simple. These declare that Bishops should have nothing to do with enforcing law upon their clergy; such an act, we are told, is like that of a father who should call in a policeman to keep his household in order. Paternal authority and remonstrance are all that a bishop should ever resort to. He should be "a Father in God, and not a Father in law."

Pausing for a moment to set these denunciations of bishops for treacherous connivance with one party in the Church against the denunciations of Bishops by that very party for tyranny and oppression, and comforting myself with the reflection that although both these contradictory accusations cannot be true, yet that they may both be untrue, I proceed to remark that this question of the "enforcement of the law of the Church by Bishops" is not quite so simple as it appears to either of these parties.

These words—Rubric, Church and State, Uniformity, Canonical Obedience—are neither in themselves, nor in their history in our Church so very clear that this question can be settled off-hand simply by reciting them. On the contrary, they represent old and yet unsettled controversies; they involve many diverse and even conflicting interests, duties, and rights, which no one can overlook who aims at being either a wise or an impartial ruler in our Church. And it might, perhaps, help to show each of these parties that there may be a little more of difficulty in the case than they are in the habit of thinking there is, if one of them would consider this question: Should a rigid conformity to the letter of the rubrics and canons be at once imposed upon all the clergy of our Church; and if not, what latitude should be allowed them, and how, under a system of "law," is this allowance possible? And if the other were to consider this question: Is a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England, who may despise and resist the paternal authority of his Bishop, really to be allowed to do and say in the

public service of the Church of England just what he pleases ; and if he is not, how is he to be restrained, and who is to restrain him ? When these two parties have each fairly pondered these respective questions, they might, perhaps, come to see that this question of the administration of the Church's law of ritual is not quite so easy of solution for those who have to administer it as for those whose easier task is merely to revile its administrators.

Meanwhile, let me say what appears to me to be the source of much misconception as to the duties of Bishops in this matter, and of much, too, of the practical difficulty involved in it. It lies, as I believe, in this—that a Bishop stands towards the laws of the Church in a twofold relation. He unites in his own person two quite distinct and different offices, that of ruler and that of judge. As a ruler he has authority ; as a judge he has jurisdiction. As a ruler he has to require obedience ; as a judge he has to punish disobedience. Both of these functions are inherent in his office of Bishop, nor can he ever divest himself of either ; because they have been given him, not only by the “ ordinance of this realm,” but “ by God's word.” There cannot be a greater mistake than to speak of the former of these as given him by the Church, and the latter as given him by the State. It was not to the prelate of an establishment, but to the Bishop of a primitive Church that an Apostle gave directions as to the manner in which he should hear accusations against a presbyter. It is not, then, as a Father in law, as it has been flippantly expressed, but as a Father in God, and therefore as having the corrective rights and duties of a Father, that a Bishop claims to sit in judgment upon a presbyter.

But in this, as in any other case of double functions vesting in the same person, there is great difficulty both for the individual exercising these functions, and for those who judge the manner in which he exercises them, in keeping them carefully distinct, and in not importing into his conduct, or the estimate of it, in one capacity, rules that should regulate it in the other ; and I cannot help thinking that much of the harsh criticism bestowed of late upon Bishops comes from overlooking this distinction.

Of the duties and difficulties of a Bishop respecting laws of ritual, when acting as a judge, I shall have to speak presently. Let me now say what appear to me to be his duties and difficulties respecting these when acting as a ruler.

As such, then, he has, in the first place, authority to require obedience to the rubrics. Whatever else the vow of canonical obedience may mean for the clergy, it means, at least, this much, that they are bound, *in foro conscientie*, to obey their Ordinary when he calls upon them to obey the laws of the Church. But this authority on his part, and this obedience on theirs, are strictly limited by the letter of these laws. No Bishop can require any clergyman in his diocese to do, in the public service of the Church, anything she has not commanded, or to refrain from

doing anything that she has commanded. If he should ever do this, it would be the undoubted right, and it might be the clear duty, of the clergy to resist him, and to invoke against him just that supreme authority of law in the name of which he would have been attempting to enforce upon them his individual opinion and will; for rubrics, like subscriptions to Articles and Creeds, if they are in one sense restrictions, are in another sense most important safeguards of liberty. If the clergy must keep within these limits, yet within them they are free; a fact which they would do well to ponder on who are clamorous for Bishops to rule them, not according to the written law of our Church, but according to some unwritten and indefinite rule of Catholic tradition.

But if it be the right of the Ordinary to require obedience to the rubrics, it may become his duty to do so, and that, too, of his own proper motion. I have never been able to adopt that merely magisterial theory of a Bishop's duty, fertile as I believe it to be in strife and litigation, which limits it to interfering only when complaint is made to him, and even then to doing no more than open his court to the complainant, and telling him to right himself if he can. To act on this principle seems to me to be nothing less than an abdication of the office of a Father in God in the Church of Christ, and a sinking down to the level of a mere ecclesiastical magistrate. I cannot consent thus to divest myself of duties and responsibilities which I believe to be essentially inherent in my office. I hold that, although it may be the height of unwisdom to seek for such occasions, nevertheless, occasions may arise when a Bishop, instead of waiting for complaints which may never come, or inviting complainants to lawsuits on which they may not be disposed to enter, should himself point out transgressions of the rubrics, and require amendment. For this reason I have never been able to accept the plea which has of late been so frequently advanced on behalf of clergymen who are accused of violating the rubrics, that whether they are or are not doing this, at any rate their congregations or their parishioners approve of all that they are doing, and that so long as this is the case no clergyman should be "molested" by the interference of his Bishop. The Church's laws of ritual are, I maintain, binding on parishioners and on minister alike, and the fact that these may have agreed together to neglect or to defy those laws, so far from diminishing, may actually enhance the duty of interference on the part of the Bishop. Rebellion is not the less rebellion, nor is it the less dangerous, because it is the act, not of one, but of many; and the duty of a ruler to suppress such rebellion is one that he owes to the society in which he bears rule, whose laws and whose authority he must not suffer to be weakened or made contemptible in his person. It may, therefore, be the duty of a Bishop to vindicate the authority of the Church, so far as he has the power to do so, against a clergyman,

even though he be abetted in his disobedience by the entire of his parish.

Nor is this theory of a Bishop's duty in this respect at all a harsh or a litigious one; on the contrary, it is, I believe, eminently calculated to prevent litigation. For I imagine that there are few clergymen who would not be more ready to correct their rubrical defects or excesses when required to do so by their Bishop, than if this demand were made by some prosecuting association, with the Ecclesiastical Court in the background held open for it by the Bishop, who, though too fatherly himself ever to prosecute his clergy, is not too fatherly to afford every facility for their prosecution by others.

But if the office of a Bishop thus confers upon him the authority at all times, and imposes on him the duty on some occasions, of requiring obedience to the rubrics, has he any discretion given him as to relaxing this obedience? If he may never command more than the Church commands, may he never allow of less? In other words, has a Bishop any dispensing power as regards the strict and literal compliance with the rubrics of our Church?

I maintain that he has, and that he has it both by the nature of his office and by the express gift of the Church herself. Such a discretionary power is vested, more or less, in every ruler, and is essential to the very idea of the government of men by men. No system of human law can ever be carried out with the terrible uniformity of the laws of nature, which overlook no failure, and pardon no transgressor. Such a system of administration of human law would not only often prove cruelly harsh and unjust, but stupidly impolitic. Every system of human government must be administered on the principle, "*Legem surdum et inexorabilem; Regem hominem esse;*" that is to say, its administration must be tempered by those considerations of equity, charity, and even of expediency, which teach all wise rulers that it is not always the highest wisdom to seek out all that is punishable, but rather to imitate that Divine wisdom which is not "extreme to mark what is done amiss."

And this discretion as regards the strict enforcement of law seems to me, as I have said, to be conferred upon the Bishop by the Church. In the solemn service in which she invests him with all the authority of his office, and bids him vow to exercise it for the restraint of "unquiet and disobedient persons," she also exhorts him, in words that should be graven on the heart of every Bishop, to use this authority, "not to hurt, but to help;" "so to minister discipline that he forget not mercy;" "to be so merciful that he be not too remiss." If these words have any meaning, they must be meant to convey just that discretionary or dispensing power in the enforcing of discipline which some are so shocked at the idea of a Bishop being intrusted with. Nor is it any valid

objection to intrusting such discretion to Bishops, that they may use it partially, capriciously, unwisely. Undoubtedly they may. It is in the nature of all discretion that it is liable to misuse. But the real question is not whether individuals may not occasionally misuse the discretion vesting in them by right of their office, but whether the advantages of allowing such discretion do not outweigh the obvious disadvantage of the possibility of its occasional abuse. If they do, instances of such abuse may be excellent reasons for depriving the individual of the office he abuses, but not for divesting the office itself of functions essential for the proper discharge of its duties.

While, therefore, I admit, and even maintain, that it may be the duty of a Bishop, when circumstances may demand it of him, to require, and, so far as he may have the power, to enforce obedience to the Church's laws, I also maintain that not only is authority given him, but that obligation is laid upon him, to exercise discretion in deciding in each case how far its circumstances do require such action on his part, and that neither by the nature of his office, nor by any vow or obligation that he has taken, is he bound always and in every case to enforce a rigid and exact compliance with the letter of the rubrics of our Church.

Nor is this discretion in the least impaired by the fact that the laws of the Church have been accepted by the State, and that the latter lends its temporal authority to strengthen the coercive jurisdiction of the Church. For whatever additional sanction or vigour these laws may have acquired by the fact of their joint reception by "this Church and realm," this fact cannot possibly diminish the amount of discretion, as to their enforcement, which by those very laws, or by the nature of law itself, vests in the rulers of the Church; that remains precisely what it was before this joint reception, and what it would be after this had ceased to exist.

And so, I must add, remains the obligation to enforce any interpretation that may be given to any particular rubric in any court of law, whether spiritual or temporal. We have of late years been so unhappily given to litigation, we have become so infected with the atmosphere of the law courts, that many have come to think of judicial decisions as imparting some new and binding authority to rubrics, and to expect that whatever Bishops may do as regards other rubrics, these, in their last interpretation, must at any rate and at all hazard be at once and universally enforced. But surely a legal decision as to the meaning of a rubric adds nothing to its authority, or even to its relative importance, and decides nothing, therefore, as to the expediency or otherwise of enforcing it in any particular case. It simply brings into accidental, and it may be most unfortunate, prominence the particular rubric which certain

parties, discreetly or indiscreetly, may have chosen as a subject for litigation. It defines, or perhaps I should rather say, it aims at defining, the exact meaning of that rubric ; but it does not thereby make it one whit the more or one whit the less binding than it was before ; nor, except for the extraneous considerations which may have been imported into the history of the case, does it in any way make it more expedient to enforce it than to enforce any other rubric in the Prayer-book. To say that it does is really to assert that we are less bound to obey rubrics which are plain and undisputed than we are to obey those which are doubtful, and which, just because they are doubtful, have been made the subject of litigation. One example will suffice, if one be needed, to show how utterly untenable is such a principle of rubrical observance as this. There are, in the same office of our Church, and nearly side by side, two rubrics ; one of which is plain, definite, and unmistakable ; it has never been the subject of litigation, simply because no human ingenuity could find in it any room for litigation. It is as follows :—“ The priest shall then place upon the table so much bread and wine as he shall think sufficient.” This rubric is, as you know, systematically violated in hundreds of our churches. The second of these rubrics is confessedly doubtful and of difficult interpretation ; it has been the subject of legal decisions which the acutest legal intellects find it difficult to reconcile with each other. It is as follows :—“ When the priest, standing before the table, hath so ordered the bread and wine,” &c. ; and this too, as interpreted by the courts, is disobeyed in hundreds of our churches. Now I ask, Why is a Bishop bound to enforce the doubtful rubric, which has been litigated, any more than the plain and precise one, which has never been litigated ? And yet to enforce the one would, as you well know, be regarded by a large party in the Church as most unnecessary strictness ; while not to enforce the other is regarded, by the same party, as most culpable connivance. Of course it may be alleged that the latter has a special doctrinal significance, and is therefore a dangerous, while the other is only a harmless and insignificant, deviation ; or that the latter is a novelty, while the former has long usage in its favour, though it be only the usage of neglect. Let us grant this, and what does it prove ? Why, simply that it is this novelty, or this alleged danger in this practice, and not the fact of the judicial decision respecting it, which is the reason for restraining it ; or, in other words, that the duty of enforcing the rubric depends on quite other considerations than the fact that it has been made the subject of a judicial decision.

We may learn, however, something more, both as to the need for this dispensing power on the part of those in authority in the Church, and also as regards the manner in which she would have that discretion exercised, by a consideration of those laws themselves.

In the first place, these laws are laws of worship. As such they set before us the Church's highest standard for the public service of the sanctuary. She has not left it to her children to teach her, as she leads them to the throne of their Heavenly Father, the fittest way of rendering to Him the honour due unto His name. Her Book of Common Prayer is not set forth by her as a set of hints for devotion to be improved upon by their wiser and devouter minds. It is for them the highest level of public worship to which she thinks they may attain without risk of extravagance or superstition. To reach this standard should be the loyal and honest aim of every one of her ministers. Nevertheless, as she herself admits, there may be "reasonable hindrances" in the way of their completely reaching it; hindrances caused by the infirmity of the minister, or by the varying needs and emergencies of many worshippers. All cannot at all times attain to this standard; and if, nevertheless, a rigid and unbending conformity to it is at all times to be required of all, then the standard must in equity and charity be lowered to meet the capacity of the very weakest of her members. What every one is absolutely bound under heavy penalties to do at all times, must in fairness be no more than every one is at all times able to do; and thus, if uniformity is to be rigidly enforced always and upon all, a minimum and not a maximum of ritual must be the result; just as on a march, if no straggling be allowed, the pace must be slackened to meet the strength of the weakest soldier in the force.

On the other hand, the amount of deflection from the rubrics cannot be left to the uncontrolled judgment or caprice of each individual minister, any more than the pace of an army on the march could be left to the discretion of each individual soldier. In the one case the soldiery, in the other case the ministry, would become a mob. If, therefore, a high standard of public worship is to be combined with reasonable allowance for the varying needs and capacities of minister and congregation; if ritual, in the effort for uniformity, is not to be brought down to its very lowest level, or, in the effort for liberty, is not to degenerate into mere license and will-worship; we must have a maximum standard of ritual to which all should be legally bound to conform, and at the same time a power of relaxing this obedience, for good and sufficient reason, vested in the hands of some living authority.

There is, however, another characteristic of our laws of ritual, which, in the judgment of our Church, requires another and further discretion on the part of those who have to administer them. It is that these laws are, more or less, of doubtful interpretation. Our Church not only admits this fact, but regards it as inevitable. "Nothing," she tells us, "can be so plainly set forth but that doubts may arise respecting the use and practice of the same;" and for this, if for no other reason, that while the letter of the law of ritual remains the same, the circumstances in reference to

which it was originally framed may have so considerably altered as to render its interpretation a matter of great doubt and difficulty. For instance, a law which regulates the position of the minister before a table which stood at the time of the passing of the law in one place in the church, and which afterwards came to stand in quite another place, may be very difficult to interpret consistently with such altered circumstances. Whatever may be the causes, however, of doubtfulness in any of our rubrics, our Church leaves us in no doubt as to the manner in which she would wish such rubrics to be dealt with. She does not direct that these shall be always referred to courts of law for a judicial decision, a mode of disposing of rubrical difficulties which does not seem to have found so much favour with the framers of our Prayer-book as it has of late years with us : possibly for the reason which we may yet more fully appreciate, that they had a very shrewd idea what the result of such a process would be as regards rubrics with such a history as ours. What they do direct is something very different ; it is that those who doubt or diversely take anything in the rubric shall "always resort to the Ordinary, who *by his discretion* shall take order for the quieting and appeasing of the same," provided that his order "be not contrary to anything in the Book" of Common Prayer.

The wording of this direction seems to me very remarkable. It clearly does not, as I understand it, require the Bishop to give a judicial interpretation of the disputed rubric. A judge could have no "discretion" as to the interpretation of the law, and it would be a mere impertinence to caution one who is bound to decide according to law not to give any decision contrary to it. But such a direction is quite intelligible if addressed, not to a judge, but to a ruler who is called upon, in a case where the law has not decidedly and finally spoken, to give, in his discretion, such an *ad interim* order as may in his opinion tend to quieting and appeasing of doubt and diversity. Such an order must not, of course, contradict any express enactment in the law applying to the case. The Ordinary may not, for instance, if there be a doubt as to the place "before the table" where the priest is to stand, direct that he shall not stand, but kneel or sit ; or, in the question at what time during divine service banns shall be read, direct that they shall not be read at all ; but short of any such direct and literal contradiction of the express words of any rubric, there is given him a very large discretion as to the order he shall make—a discretion which I maintain has no meaning if it do not relate to the circumstances of the case as well as to the words of the law, and which, therefore, allows of the varying of the direction according to what, under the circumstances, may seem best to tend to appeasing of strife. At the same time, the proviso, that this order shall not be contrary to law, secures that it shall not have any binding effect in law. It leaves it open to those who obtain

it to impugn it if they think fit, on the ground of illegality, and to press for a formal and final legal decision on the point in a court of law; while, on the other hand, the Bishop himself may, upon better information, amend his direction, which meanwhile is binding only on those who have mutually agreed to submit to it.

I confess that I can imagine no mode of dealing with disputed rubrics better calculated for quieting and appeasing of strife than this. It admits of diversity of use in different dioceses, or even in different parishes in the same diocese, while it prevents this diversity from running into mere self-will and license by subjecting it to the action of authority. It leaves the area of "arguable ground" in the doubtful rubrics untouched by new and narrowing legal interpretations, while yet it leaves it free to all to seek these interpretations if they are so minded. It checks litigation, it allows of reasonable liberty, and yet secures a reasonable conformity. Whether we have found a more excellent way of late years in promoting litigation, narrowing liberty, and substituting for reasonable conformity hard and narrow uniformity, is yet to be seen. Be this as it may, it is at least clear that our Church, whether wisely or unwisely, did give to her Bishops a discretion of direction in the case of doubtful rubrics.

But the voice of living authority is to be invoked in the administration of the rubrics for yet another reason, namely, that the rubrics are not, and cannot be, exhaustive directions for public service. It is impossible that they should be so. A book of ritual which should prescribe with exact minuteness, not only all the rites and ceremonies to be performed by the minister, but also all the subsidiary acts and gestures necessary to the performance of them, would, if it were possible to frame it, be an utterly intolerable burden on the clergy. Much in this matter must be left, in the first instance, to the discretion of the minister, who is presumed to have the ordinary common sense and right feeling required to guide him in exercising that discretion. Nevertheless, this cannot be left to his altogether uncontrolled and irresponsible discretion. A clergyman in our Church is certainly not at liberty to supply every hiatus, or everything that he chooses to regard as a hiatus, in her public service with any rite or ceremony that he pleases to adopt. If omission be not prohibition in all cases, it most certainly is not in all cases permission. The clergyman who has promised to use the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, and "none other," is surely not therefore entitled to say or do anything in the service that he chooses, simply because it is *not* prescribed. Some discretion, therefore, there must be to control his; and whose should this be if not his whose godly admonitions he has solemnly promised to obey? Certainly the claim on the part of Bishops to exercise this control is no new one. It is no modern maxim of Church law that "no new

ceremonies be received into the Church without the assent of the Bishop."*

In three important respects, then, as regards the observance of rubrics, a discretion, as I conceive, is given to a Bishop of the Church of England. He is given a discretion as to enforcing the law when it is clear, as to directing when it is doubtful, and as to regulating subsidiary practices and usages in cases where it is silent.

But if this discretion on his part is not to become mere caprice; if it is to be what the law contemplates by this word, a reasonable discretion, it too must be regulated by some broad and fixed rules for its proper and prudent exercise. Two such rules our Church has laid down; broad enough, as it seems to me, to govern all the discretion she allows to any of us, whether in the observance or in the enforcement of her rubrics. They are ORDER and EDIFICATION. These are the two objects at which, she informs us, she has aimed in all that she herself has done in retaining or abolishing of ceremonies. Those which she has retained are, as she states, designed "as well for a decent order in the Church for which they were first devised, as because they pertain to edification, whereunto all things done in the Church ought to be referred." As regards the first of these objects—the maintenance of "order and quiet discipline"—she evidently considers it as a thing which may be far more important than the exact observance of those ceremonies which she has retained with a view to it. "The keeping or omitting of a ceremony, considered in itself, is," she tells us, "a small thing;" but "the wilful and contemptuous transgression of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God." The evil and danger, then, in her eyes, of a breach of the rubrics, lie far more in the spirit in which it is committed than in the act itself. Those who have to deal with deflections from her rubrics are therefore bound, I think, to ask, not merely is this particular act a breach of the letter of the Church's law, but is it done in such a manner and spirit as to be perilous to the common order and discipline? Is it done, for instance, in the merest wilfulness of sloth, or in deliberate breach of some plain rubric, which the clergyman declares "nothing shall ever induce him to obey," or in defiance of the authority of

* The words in the text are taken from a passage in Van Espen's "*Jus Ecclesiasticum*," which, from its bearing upon the claim for uncontrolled license in the name of Catholic practices set up by some of our clergy, might have been written yesterday. It is as follows:—"Itaque singulare ecclesiarum ritus atque cæremonialia sive ritualia servanda sunt; neque Presbyteris aliisque ministris privatâ auctoritate ritum præscriptum immutare licet; eo etiam prætextu, quod contrarius ritus pristinæ ecclesiæ disciplinæ esset conformior; videreturque magis ad excitandum populi devotionem nec non explicanda mysteria aptior et convenientior. Novæ cæremoniæ nullæ in ecclesiis recipiantur sine episcopi judicio."—VAN ESPEN, *Jus Ecclesiasticum*, pars ii. sec. i. tit. 5.

the Church herself to make any laws which, in the opinion of the clergyman, contravene some higher law than hers? If so, it becomes an act in the last degree perilous to order and discipline. It is the setting up of the will or opinion of the individual against the law of the society of which he is a member, and must be dealt with accordingly. Is it, on the other hand, a deviation for which the clergyman, while loyally desirous to obey the law, can honestly plead some special cause, some reasonable hindrance in himself, or some exceptional peculiarity in the conditions of his work, which has in a manner compelled him to this change? Then such a deviation from the rubric, though in the letter precisely the same with that which, in another case, needed instant correction as "no small offence," may in his case be safely treated as a "small thing." And, in so treating it, the godly order and discipline would not be weakened, but preserved, by avoiding that overstrained enforcement of law which leads, more than anything else, to the breaking of it.

In like manner is the Bishop, as I conceive, bound in his discretion to consider the question of edification. And, in saying this, I certainly do not mean that either Bishop or clergyman is to claim "to appoint or change ceremonies of the Church" on the ground that others more edifying are adopted in their place. We are bound to assume that her rule is in all cases the most edifying. But the real question is, not whether we may alter for edification any of her ceremonies, but whether, in cases where any of these have for special necessity been altered or omitted, any discretion on the ground of edification should be allowed as to enforcing them? I think there should: I think, for instance, that where there has prevailed in any parish some one of those long-established usages which, from one cause or another, are almost sure to spring up alongside of law, and which come often to be held in greater reverence than law itself, and which nevertheless are not in strict accordance with the rubrics, it may be a serious question how far the admitted end of the rubrics—edification—may be attained or hindered by immediately and peremptorily requiring their correction.

I can imagine cases in which most grievous damage to the interests of the Church, and even of religion, might be occasioned in a parish by a sudden and violent reform of unrubrical usages. Again, I can imagine other cases in which these very same usages might be so unedifying or hurtful as to need the promptest reform. Let us suppose the case of two parishes, in one of which a loyal and zealous parish priest has found, on coming into it, the services of the Church far below their proper level. He endeavours to reform this state of things; but, if he be wise, if he does not wish to startle and alienate his flock, he will do so gradually; he will correct first one defect, then another, as he finds his people will bear it; gently, but steadily, raising them to

the true standard of the Church's worship. All this time, however, he is technically a law-breaker—he is omitting, or imperfectly performing, every Sunday of his life, something which the Church has enjoined, and yet all this time he is loyally aiming at perfect obedience to her laws. In the next parish to this there may be an incumbent, neither loyal nor zealous, who is quietly and steadily lowering, for his own convenience and ease, or to suit his particular doctrinal prejudices, the standard of public service, omitting all he can or dare omit from his public duties, and doing much of what he does perform imperfectly. Now, it is quite conceivable that at a given moment each of these two clergymen might be omitting the very same ceremony or service, or performing it with the very same deficiencies of rite; but would any one say that they should be dealt with alike by their Bishop—that he should hurry and spoil the work of the wise and diligent pastor by requiring immediate conformity with all the still-unfulfilled rubrics, in order that he might, with a semblance of justice, correct the neglects of his slothful neighbour; or pass over entirely the faults or omissions of the latter, in order that he might consistently do the same with the former? Is he, then, having regard to edification, to forbear to use his authority in the one case, and to exert it in the other? Distinctly I say, he is to take this latter course, if he is to use his authority, “not to hurt, but to help;” if he is to exercise just that discretion which I believe was given him, that it might be used in just such a case as this.

It is clear, therefore, that the application of this twofold rule of order and edification must vary, as all discretion must and ought to vary, with circumstances, and that the same rubrical defects which are harmless, or even edifying, under one set of circumstances, might be unedifying and perilous under other circumstances. And it is this fact which makes the exercise of any discretion in these matters on the part of the Bishop at once so difficult and so invidious, exposing him always to plausible imputations of injustice and caprice; imputations which he must bear, if he will do his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him, and which he can only escape by waiving all discretion inherent in his office, and dealing out with apparent impartiality, but real injustice, equal measure to unequal faults: a mode of proceeding which must end either in a vain and irritating attempt at enforcing all the rubrics equally all round, or in quietly refraining from enforcing them in any case, and leaving their enforcement entirely to the desultory and capricious action of individual zeal or party spirit. Which of these two latter courses is likely to prove in the end the more hurtful to the order and peace of the Church it is very hard to say.

So far we have been considering this question in its simplest form, as one between the Bishop and the clergy only, and we

have seen that even in this form it has its difficulties. There is, however, another aspect of it to be considered. Bishops and clergy cannot be allowed to settle this matter of rubrical observance, however pleasantly or discreetly, between themselves. It involves the rights of a third and a very important party, whose voice in the decision of it must always be a potent one. I mean the parishioner. And it is when we come to consider what his rights really are that we encounter the real and most serious difficulty in the case. Every parishioner has unquestionably the right to claim the performance of divine service in his parish church according to the form prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. It is on the faith of an undertaking to use that form, "and none other," in his public ministrations that the incumbent obtains his right to the emoluments of his benefice, which constitute the spiritual trust-fund of the parish, the enjoyment of which he is entitled to only on the condition that he comply with the provisions of the trust-deed. When a parishioner, therefore, demands of his clergyman strict compliance with these provisions, he is demanding nothing more than his strict right; and when he appeals to the Bishop to enforce this right, he is appealing to him not in his capacity of a ruler, but in that of a judge ecclesiastical, called on to do justice between two contending parties.

Now, it is a very serious matter for a judge to close the door of his court against any suitor who brings there a wrong to be redressed, and I have never, therefore, been able to see the sense or the charity of the sneer so often indulged in against the "aggrieved parishioner." Every parishioner, whose clergyman breaks the rubrics, has, in strictness and in law, a grievance of which to complain, and there may be cases in which this is not merely a technical and legal, but a very real and substantial, grievance.

The parishioner who finds himself, by what he believes to be the illegal action of a pastor in whose appointment he has had no voice, and whom he has no power to displace, compelled to witness or participate in ceremonies which he abhors, or deprived of those which he values, is undoubtedly an "aggrieved parishioner," and I do not hesitate to say he is in danger of becoming an offended and alienated parishioner. He may be, he sometimes is, very unreasonable, very strongly prejudiced both as to what he likes and dislikes in the performance of divine service. The rubrical defect or excess of which he complains may be a very small matter, and a wider charity or better knowledge would probably lead him to see that it was so, and to waive his strict legal right for the sake of peace. Nevertheless, what he is claiming is his right. Ignorant and prejudiced as he may be, he knows at least this much—that it is his right; and it is hard to make him understand why his clergyman should be allowed, for any reason whatever, to deprive him of it.

Now, as I have said, here has always seemed to me the real strain of this whole question. How far am I, as a ruler, justified, for any of those considerations of prudence, charity, or edification of which I have spoken, in refusing to a parishioner that enforcement of his strict rights which he claims at my hands as a judge? May I, to do so "great a right" to the clergyman, do this "little wrong" to the parishioner; and if I may not, what then becomes of that dispensing power which we have seen to be absolutely essential to the wise administration of the rubrics, as between Bishops and clergy? I may, of course, reason with such a complainant; I may endeavour to show him how small the matter is of which he is complaining; I may try to induce him to yield it for peace' sake; I may even say, in many cases I should say, This is a matter in which certainly I do not feel myself called on to institute proceedings against your clergyman; there are such and such reasons why it would seem to me very inexpedient in this case to enforce the law. But if he reply to me—Still, such is the law, you have admitted it to be so, and—wisely or unwisely—I am only claiming my legal rights at your hands: how am I, in justice, to refrain from directing the clergyman to give this man his legal rights, or how, at least, am I to refrain from giving him facility for enforcing his rights in my court?

I have always felt this difficulty so strongly that, as the clergy of this diocese are by this time well aware, I have been in the habit of telling them that while I will certainly never harass them by a fussy enforcement of the letter of all the rubrics, yet that it is quite another matter when complaint is made to me, even by a single parishioner, for a breach of the rubrics; that I feel in such a case my discretion as a ruler to be very seriously limited by this claim of right made to me as a judge; and that I may be compelled, whatever my own opinion may be as to the importance or expediency of enforcing any particular rubric, to say to the clergyman—After all, such is the law; this man is asking, however litigiously or unreasonably, only his strict right and no more, and I counsel you to yield it to him. And yet, on the other hand, when I do this I may be enforcing the strict letter of the law of the Church in a case in which considerations of prudence or of charity would lead me, if left to the exercise of my own discretion, to refrain from enforcing it.

This question, then, of the administration of the rubrics of our Church is, as I think I have shown you, not such a very simple and easy one as it appears at first. On the contrary, the more we consider it, the more it seems to be a complex and difficult one. And its difficulty, broadly stated, really lies in this—that while as rulers in the Church we are called on to administer a code of laws not in all respects perfectly clear, in some respects obsolete, not intended by its framers to be rigidly and literally enforced on all occasions, never, in fact, rigidly enforced in the history of our

Church, and needing, therefore, much caution and forbearance in its administration ; yet, on the other hand, as judges we may be called upon at any moment, and under the most undesirable conditions, at the demand, it may be, of the least discreet persons in our dioceses, to enforce some one or other of its provisions ; and our delicate task is to decide in such a case whether we may act as rulers only, and exercise that discretion which is inherent in our office as such, or whether we must act as judges, and consider simply what is the law, that we may mete it out justly as between man and man. And further, it is to be remembered that this choice is just now to be exercised at a time when party spirit has elevated precisely the most doubtful of the laws we have to administer into sacred symbols whose integrity must be guarded with most jealous watchfulness ; while at the same time the Church, in consequence of the violence of party strife, has found it impossible to relieve us of any of our difficulties in the only way in which these could effectually be removed, namely, by a wise and tolerant revision of these rubrics, and only prays us in her synods to enhance the already sufficient difficulty of our position, by adding to our present discretion of allowing what is illegal the amazing and hitherto unknown discretion of forbidding what is assumed to be legal.

But, whatever may be the difficulties in the way of exercising these two different and somewhat opposite functions intrusted to us, there can be no question which a Bishop should most affect. His broad rule of administration should surely be—Authority where I may, jurisdiction where I must. Authority, pastoral authority, exercised *in foro conscientiae*, always according to law, but not always by law, will suffice, I believe, in the great majority of cases, for the government of reasonable and loyal men ; and I believe, further, that it is the wisdom of those who are called to rule to assume the loyalty of those they rule over. I have, I think I may say, ever done so amongst you. I give the clergy of this diocese credit for loyally desiring to carry out the law of their Church so far as they know it, and for willingness to listen to the voice of their Bishop, when he may have occasion to call them to a stricter obedience to that law. I give them credit too as pastors, to whom have been intrusted cure and government of souls, for a wise and charitable discretion in their carrying out of the laws of our Church in their parishes ; and therefore I am slow, very slow, to interfere with that discretion. Nevertheless, I do not fear to remind them that they and I are alike legally bound to strict and even literal obedience to her laws, and that the highest duty she may exact from us may be the sacrifice of our own most cherished wishes and preferences to the voice of authority speaking in the name of law. I do not hesitate, therefore, to tell them that I may at any moment find myself constrained to demand from them this sacrifice, even under circumstances

that may not only seem to be, but really be, trying, and I ask them to believe that when I do so it is because I am honestly persuaded that I am not free, in such a case, to use the discretion I have hitherto exercised, but must act with the colourless and strict impartiality of a judge, and that I rely, and confidently rely, in this case on their compliance, unless they honestly believe that I have mistaken the law, in which case, of course, I cannot complain if they claim the arbitration of a higher jurisdiction than mine. I only ask that when they do claim this, they will submit to its arbitrament. On the other hand, I give the laity credit for reasonableness in their assertion of their strict legal rights; for an unwillingness to press these in every point to their utmost letter; for a generous and kindly respect for the feelings and wishes of their pastors, or it may be for those of their fellow-parishioners; for a regard for the peace and charity which are above rubrics, but which soon vanish, never perhaps to return, in any parish where men once begin to exalt every trifling point of the rubrics first into a party symbol, and then into a claim of legal right to be fought out to the bitter end in the law courts.

I have not hitherto found this system of government to fail. I have not hitherto found the clergy or the laity of this diocese so unreasonable as to prevent my disposing, without lawsuits, of such questions of ritual as have yet come before me, and I see no reason why this should not be the case hereafter, notwithstanding the passing of this much-dreaded Act.

On the contrary, I cannot but hope and believe that we shall go on much as we have done before, with, perhaps, a quiet and gradual approach on all sides to a closer conformity to the Church's law, by correcting errors on either side, of excess or of defect; and I should hope, too, with a growing appreciation of the fact that, litigate and multiply legal decisions as we may, there will still be ample room within our rubrics for ritual which some of us may dislike, but which others may enjoy; and that our wisdom will be to try and find out, not how much we can repress, but how much we can safely tolerate. Some measure and limits there must be, and this Act will help, I think, ere long, to define these; but within these limits there must be large-hearted toleration, if we are to live together much longer in one Church. The time may come, perhaps, when this toleration shall be defined and secured by clear and definite law; meanwhile, it must be aimed at by the discretion of those who administer the law, and still more by the charity and moderation of those who have to obey it. To that charity and moderation I make my appeal for aid in carrying out this Act for regulating our laws of worship in that spirit in which our Church would have those laws administered. And, judging from the past, I do not think that I shall make this appeal in vain.

And now let us see how far this Act is capable of being ad-

ministered in the spirit and on the principles which I have thus endeavoured to describe.

In the first place, then, I observe that the Act recognises the right which parishioners have always possessed of proceeding, with the consent of the Bishop, against anything they may regard as a breach of the law of the Church in matters relating to public worship on the part of their clergyman. It does not, as is sometimes alleged, give them any new powers in this respect; on the contrary, it very considerably limits the powers they formerly possessed. In the first place, it narrows the definition of parishioner, which in law has a much wider signification, to persons who shall have resided in the parish for one year previous to proceeding under this Act, and who shall have signed a declaration that they are *bonâ fide* members of the Church of England. In the next place, it requires that instead of one parishioner, as formerly, having the right to institute proceedings, there must now be three to join in them. And, lastly, it imposes upon all such proceedings the wholesome check of security for costs.

Let us suppose, however, that three parishioners, thus duly qualified, make a complaint to me of any clergyman in this diocese. I observe, in the next place, that the Act gives me a period of twenty-one days before I am called upon to take any legal step whatever respecting this complaint. Here the Act gives me the opportunity, which I shall certainly not fail to use, for persuading the parties, if I can, to accept the older and better way appointed by the Church for the settlement of rubrical disputes. I will try if they can be induced to resort to me as Ordinary, and to accept from me that extra-judicial and informal direction that the Church allows me, in any dispute, to give for the quieting and appeasing of strife and diversity. If they will do this, the case will, of course, be entirely withdrawn from the operation of this Act, and there will be peace. If, however, either of these parties refuse to do this, I am then to decide, "on considering all the circumstances of the case," whether any further proceedings shall be taken; and if I decide that they shall not, I have the power to stop them, and from that decision there is no appeal. This is a very large discretion indeed. Subject only to the check that I must state in writing, and place on public record, my reason for it, it is absolute and uncontrolled. It gives to the Bishop all, and even more than all, of that dispensing power which I have claimed for him, for it allows him not only a discretion as to proceedings on his own part, but as to all proceedings on the part of those who seek to promote his office as a judge. And it allows him, further, in the exercise of this discretion, to take into account a much larger range of circumstances than I confess I should have thought myself free to consider, in deciding whether to permit a suit by a parishioner, before the passing of this Act. All the circumstances of the case,

in their fullest extent of prudence, charity, and expediency, are open to me by this provision, and I am not only entitled, but bound to consider them all.

Naturally, therefore, clergy and parishioners will wish to know what are those circumstances which I hold would warrant me in refusing to allow of suits under this Act; and, although I should not think it wise or safe to fetter the discretion which this Act gives me by laying down minute rules for its exercise, which must vary greatly in different cases, yet I think I may venture to lay down two or three broad rules which I will certainly apply to every case. And, in the first place, I shall certainly require that this Act shall be the last, and not the first, resort of complainants. I have no idea of any parishioner attempting suddenly to drag his clergyman into a lawsuit without previous warning or remonstrance. My first question, then, of every complainant under this Act will be, Have you spoken with your clergyman on this matter, and asked him to alter what you object to in his mode of conducting divine service? If you have not, I shall conclude that what you want is not justice, but litigation, and I shall certainly not allow your suit to proceed.

In the second place, I will allow of no suits for the "purpose of ascertaining the law," as it is called. We have had, in my opinion, quite enough of these already. The cases which I shall allow to go to a hearing shall be those in which a complainant has, or at least believes he has, a clear and *bonâ fide* grievance to be redressed, and not a rubrical investigation to be pursued, at the cost of the peace of the parish and the Church.

Thirdly, I will allow of no merely frivolous and vexatious suits; no suits in which it may be clear to me that a parishioner, merely to gratify some petty parochial grudge, is raising against his pastor some small point of rubrical law, respecting which no one has ever complained but himself, nor he before he quarrelled with his incumbent.

Fourthly, I will allow of no proceedings respecting rubrics now before the superior courts for interpretation, pending their decision. Such proceedings would be, in my opinion, merely gratuitous and mischievous litigation; nothing can be gained either for peace or discipline by fresh suits running parallel with those already proceeding in the same matter. When the decision of the court of final appeal shall have finally, on a full rehearing and argument, been given on these vexed questions, that decision must be regarded as fixed and settled law; at least, it will so be regarded and treated by me. Meanwhile, it seems to me reasonable that we should wait for this decision, and I mean to do so, with one distinct condition, however, that meanwhile none of the practices now being litigated in these courts shall be introduced into any of the parish churches in this diocese. For if it be reasonable that a clergyman should not be harassed by a

prosecution now for some practice which possibly, six months hence, may be declared legal; on the other hand, it seems to me equally reasonable that he should refrain from disturbing the peace of his parish by introducing some practice which, six months hence, may be finally declared illegal. I should regard the clergyman who did this at this moment as wantonly disturbing the peace of the Church, and I should certainly not interfere to save him from the penalty of a lawsuit. With this exception, and, of course, with the obvious proviso that these suits in the superior courts are being *bonâ fide* pressed on to a reasonably speedy decision, I mean to proclaim in this diocese a truce between the combatants on these disputed points while the battle is being fought out by their respective champions elsewhere. It may be that the result of this combat may be greatly to damp the ardour for prosecution, when those who are now eager to engage in it may have discovered that they have changed places with their adversaries, and that, if the law is to be enforced, it will be enforced, not against these, but against themselves.

Lastly, among the circumstances of the case which I shall think myself free to consider, will be the question whether the particular practice complained of has been of recent introduction, or has long-standing usage in its favour; whether it has ever been objected to before in that parish; whether the majority, or any considerable number, of the parishioners, and especially of the communicants, share the dislike to it of the objectors; or whether these are singular, or nearly so, in their complaint of it. I do not say that any one of these circumstances in the case will be decisive as to my action; but certainly I shall hold myself bound to include them amongst those I take into consideration. On the other hand, I must plainly and distinctly say, that whenever I have to deal with a clear and plain case of rubrical transgression, whether of excess or of defect, which shall seem to me to give reasonable ground of offence to a reasonable number of parishioners, I shall certainly require the clergyman to amend what is complained of; and should he refuse to do so, I will give the complainants redress at my hands under this Act.

But let us suppose, in the next place, that in a case which satisfies these conditions I decide that proceedings must go forward. The next duty that devolves on me is to require each party to state whether they will submit to my direction. If they, or either of them, will not, I must send the case to the Archbishop, who must remit it to the judge of the supreme court. If they will, I am to proceed to hear the matter of the representation "in such manner as I think fit;" but in whatever manner I may hear it, whether *in camerâ* or *in curiâ*, whether with or without a legal assessor, it seems to me clear that I must hear and decide it as a judge; for I am required to issue thereupon a judgment, or, if necessary, a monition, which may be enforced by legal process; a thing which

I cannot possibly do, as it seems to me, save on strictly and purely legal grounds. All my discretion, therefore, as a chief pastor and ruler, ends, as it seems to me, at this point. I may decide afterwards as an umpire, or rather as a judge having consensual jurisdiction; but I must decide in exact accordance with the strict letter of the law. To decide at this stage of the case on any other principle would, in my opinion, be the worst kind of lawlessness—the lawlessness of a judge who should allow questions of polity, or even of charity, to influence his legal judgment.

All the discretion given me by this Act must, therefore, be exerted prior to the moment when I decide that proceedings must go on; from that moment the case must proceed in due course of law to its final decision, either by the judgment of the higher courts, if the parties prefer to seek this, or by mine, if they agree to accept it; but in either case it must be a judicial decision on the mere letter of the law, and on nothing else.

As to what may follow upon such decisions in the way of legal penalty for their enforcement, I have no wish, and there is, I fully believe, no need for me to dwell; for these penalties can only come upon such as may have made up their minds to refuse submission to the law of the Church, when finally interpreted, after a fair hearing in the supreme courts. No penalty named in this Act can touch any clergyman who is willing to obey the law, once it has been fairly argued and decided; for no one under this Act is to be punished for having broken the law; he is only required to obey it, or rather, to promise obedience to it in the future; and ample time—no less than three years—is given him before the last penalty of deprivation is inflicted for continued disobedience. But in the end, and at the last, the law must prevail, and the clergyman submit or be deprived; and I confess I see no injustice or hardship in this. A benefice obtained on condition of obeying the law cannot continue to be held by one who refuses to obey the law, or—what comes to the same thing—who refuses to obey any interpretation of it, save his own. Whether such conduct is or is not lawlessness is a question on which it seems men entertain different opinions, but there can be no question that it must be dealt with as lawlessness. It is impossible, in any community governed by law, that any individual should be allowed to exempt himself from any law, or any legal interpretation of law, by merely saying, I deny this to be law. Such a state of things would be simply chaos. He may say, if he pleases, I think this bad law, I disobey it, and I take the consequences; and the event must prove whether he be in that case a rebel *against*, or, as he claims to be, a rebel *for* the law. But it is unreasonable to say, I think this bad law, I disobey it, and I deprecate the consequences; and still more unreasonable is it to blame the ruler who accepts, as he must accept, the issue thus raised, and enforces, as he must in that case enforce, the law, were

it only in the interests of the liberty of the objector, who hopes by his resistance to bring about the reversal of his sentence.

I need not, however, dwell upon a contingency which I have no reason to suppose will ever arise in this diocese. What we are now concerned with is my administration of an Act forced upon the Church by those of her extreme parties who refused to listen to the voice of authority, and demanded to be governed by legal compulsion only. Happily the nation has not yet taken them at their word; and a large measure of the discretion which they would have rejected is left, by this new Act, to that authority which they despised and denounced. You have now heard from me the manner in which I mean to exercise this discretion.

To sum up once and for all, in one sentence, my rule of government in this matter, it will be plainly and broadly this. For nothing short of deliberate refusal when called on by me, in virtue of his vow of canonical obedience, to obey a plain and undisputed rubric, or the final interpretation of a disputed rubric in a fairly-argued cause, shall any clergyman in this diocese be subjected with my consent to the pains and penalties of a suit at law; but for such disobedience he must not expect, and I do not think that any one of the clergy of this diocese does expect, protection at my hands.

And now, to pass away from this ungracious theme of law, and legal penalties, and Acts of Parliament. Let me say on this general question of our rubrical disputes a few words which may, I hope, help us to estimate a little more patiently our present position, and calculate, if not more hopefully, at least more clearly and reasonably, our future prospects.

What, let me ask, is the real meaning of this strife about two or three rubrics not in themselves of any great apparent importance, and to which our Church has never assigned any doctrinal significance? Why is it that men not presumably more unreasonable than their fellows are throwing into this controversy, on either side, such passionate energy and keenness of strife? Must it not be because the sources of this strife lie deeper than these rubrics, and would have produced it in some other form, had these rubrics never existed, or this Act for enforcing them never been passed?

Petty and unimportant as these rubrics may seem in themselves, the strife respecting them is deeply affected by the influence of the two great controversies of our day—the question of the relations between Church and State, and the question between religion and infidelity. The first is obviously involved in the debates as to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and the right of civil courts to adjudicate in questions of Church law, which this controversy has raised. One cannot but see that these are the reflex current of that deep tide of events which in other countries has snapped, and in ours

is straining and stretching, the tie that binds together the State and the Church; the result of which, in more than one country in Christendom, is already becoming, not the realisation of a great statesman's dream of a Free Church in a Free State, but the deadly struggle of a fanatical Church with an infidel Government. The beginnings of this state of things may be seen amongst ourselves; and men who feel already the strain of this conflict may be expected, under its influence, to throw into their debates, even about the smallest matters which involve it, a passionate earnestness that may seem altogether out of proportion to their intrinsic importance.

The other cause is not quite so near the surface, and yet it is not far to seek. The profoundly materialistic philosophy of our day, with its abhorrence of the very idea of the spiritual and the supernatural, naturally opposes itself to a spiritual and supernatural religion, and especially to those parts of it in which its claim to the supernatural is most distinctly asserted. Necessarily, therefore, it denounces with the bitterest scorn and hatred the sacramental teaching of Christianity, as savouring, above all the rest, of superstition and sacerdotalism. The very idea of those material elements in the sacraments which natural philosophers can weigh and analyze being made the channels of a supernatural efficacy by the action of a man like themselves, is to them intolerable. The sacraments are, therefore, the standing and irritating protest of the Church against materialism, and they hate and denounce these accordingly with a fierceness that provokes a reaction almost as perilous on the other side. If the Church must ever maintain her protest against materialism, how can she better do so, it is asked, than by insisting more and more strongly upon the miraculous and supernatural character of all her rites, and especially of that one which is most material in its outward aspect, and which therefore gives her the best occasion for defying materialism by the assertion of miracle? And thus the assertion of sacerdotalism and sacramentalism in their extremest form comes to be regarded as the best defence against the blank denials of infidelity, and men come to persuade themselves that excess of belief on these points is not only pious, but prudent; that, in an age which believes too little, it is but an error on the safe side to believe too much; and every such excess in dogma or in ritual is looked upon as a fresh outwork thrown up around the central citadel of the Incarnation, where lies enshrined the miraculous life of the Church.

And yet this is a perilous mistake. You will never succeed in curing believing too little by believing too much; on the contrary, every such addition to the strict and exact letter of supernatural dogma weakens it ultimately by the reaction it provokes. Force on men's minds the incredible as the highest form of the supernatural, and you force them to regard the supernatural as

altogether incredible. The experiment has been tried, is being tried, on the large scale before our eyes. What is the history of modern Romanism but the attempt to fight materialism by exaggerations of the miraculous? And what has been the result? A deeper and still deeper divorce between intellect and faith; a wider and still wider alienation 'between the laity and the priesthood, between modern civilisation and Christianity.

These additional dogmas, then, these pious opinions, are not the safeguards and outworks of the citadel; they are rather the suburbs which, in times of peace, men build around the fortifications of their cities, but which, in times of war, afford a shelter and a vantage-ground to the enemy.

And yet it is impossible not to sympathize with those who build them. Even while we wish that their faith in the security of the fortress were stronger, we honour the zeal that seeks, however erroneously, to defend it. And even while we may be constrained, for the sake of the very fortress itself, to check such unwise building, we long to see the builders find for their zeal and energy other and better use. At any rate, regarding as I do this outburst of what is called Ritualism, or rather, of those doctrinal tendencies of which it is the expression, as the reaction in great measure against the infidelity of the age, I do not anticipate its repression from any mere enforcement or revision of rubrics, however necessary on other grounds such enforcement or revision may be. It will have its course, and will wax or wane with the infidelity that provokes and strengthens it. For this reason, however, I dread, far more than the excesses it indulges in, the reaction it will certainly provoke. I fear to see—I think I already see—this reaction beginning amongst us in our universities, in our popular literature, and in the ministry itself. I expect to see a Broad, a very Broad, Church school indeed, largely replacing, by its sceptical negations, the passionate dogmatical fervour of the extreme High Church school, and yet provoking that, meanwhile, into more and more violent extremes. I am not, therefore, so sanguine as some amongst us are of the immediate future of our Church. If she is to be saved from her present perils from unbelief, her deliverance will not come from vestments, and lights, and incense, or from the erroneous doctrines which these are sometimes made to symbolize, for we shall never conquer materialism in philosophy by importing it into theology. It will come by the uprising of some school of Christian apology which shall confute the adversaries of the supernatural, and give its friends breathing-space in which to grow calm and wise and moderate again.

Just now there seems no very immediate prospect of this: not the less, however, must we meanwhile do our part to preserve the purity of our Faith and worship, imperilled as I believe these to be by this recoil from infidelity towards superstition. But we must

do this with very patient hearts and not unkindly hands; not looking for any very great results on the deeper movements of our times from such outward action as we may bring to bear upon the merely outward symbols of these movements; and even when we deal with these, as we must deal with them, thinking kindly, whatever be our provocation to think otherwise, of those who cherish these symbols because they have learned, however erroneously as we may think, to identify them with truths that are as dear to ourselves as to them.

In this spirit, not certainly of sanguine hopefulness, but rather of anxiety, and yet of trust in Him who has brought us in times past through worse perils than these, should we contemplate, as it seems to me, the nearer future of our Church. Let us ask Him to give us, against the perils that threaten us from within and without, the wisdom that comes of a pure heart, the courage that comes from faith, and the patience and forbearance that come of brotherly kindness and charity. May it be so for His name sake! AMEN.

APPENDIX A.

ANALYSIS OF REPLIES TO VISITATION INQUIRIES.

	Archdeaconry of Leicester.	Archdeaconry of Oakham.	Archdeaconry of Northampton.	Total.
Number of Churches from which Returns were made	540	92	75	320
Churches having service on any week-days	143	9	27	60
Churches having daily service	24	114	159	463
Churches having service on Ascension Day	190	31	27	123
Churches having Holy Communion less frequently than once a month	65	13	17	52
Churches having Holy Communion weekly	22	103	148	443
Churches having collections for Foreign and Home Missions	192	11	17	56
Churches restored since last visitation	28	(partially) 2	1	6
Churches built or rebuilt since last visitation	3	123	145	454
Total amount of voluntary contributions for Church building and restoration Parishes having no lay agency other than that of Sunday-School Teachers .	£37,633	£14,656	£22,819	£75,108
Parishes in which Parochial Councils exist	186	4	2	16
Number of Church schools in the diocese	10	24	31	539
<i>Number of parishes from which no returns were made of number of scholars</i>	45	11,188	14,964	48,945
Number of scholars	22,793	123	164	497
Number of Sunday Schools	210	15	20	97
<i>Number of parishes from which no returns were made of number of scholars</i>	44	8,661	14,964	39,901
Number of scholars	16,276	31	50	144
Number of Schools built or enlarged since last visitation	63	£15,242	£9,311	£59,865
Amount of voluntary contributions to these	£35,312			51
Number of School Boards formed				6
Number of Church schools rented or assigned to School Boards				

APPENDIX B.

ANALYSIS OF REPORTS OF DIOCESAN RELIGIOUS INSPECTORS, 1874.

	Leicester.	Northampt	Total.
Number of Church schools . .	288	251	539
Number of schools inspected .	255	212	
Number permanently declining in- spection }	17	12	29
Schools reported as excellent or good }	68	123*	
Schools reported as fair . .	103	127	
Schools reported as indifferent or bad }	84	36	
Number of children present at examination }	19,502	19,241	38,743
Number present in 1873 . .	17,141	16,975	34,116

* The figures under this and the two following heads in the Archdeaconry of Northampton represent Departments of Schools, *i.e.* Male, Female, Infant.



